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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"THIS POOR MAN CRIED"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, April 8th, 1951
(Electrically Recorded)

"This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles."—Psalm 34:6.

Prayer Before the Sermon

We are happy O Lord in the privilege which is ours of having direct access by Jesus Christ through one Spirit unto the Father. It is our privilege to present our needs at the Throne of Grace. We bless Thee that Thy throne is a Throne of Grace. No other throne should we poor sinners dare approach. But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared.

May every one in this assembly this morning even now feel Thy presence; may we be enabled by Thy Spirit consciously to enter into communion with the most High, and even as we pray in our hearts, give us, we pray Thee, the assurance that we have commerce with Heaven, and that our prayers are being heard.

There is not one of us who does not need daily to pray, Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Help us all thus to pray just at this moment, that so in our hearts confessing our sin before Thee, we may have the delightful assurance that our sins are forgiven us for Thy name's sake; that we, Thy children, are able to look into Thy face and call Thee "Father". We delight to know that Thou dost understand us so perfectly, that though Thou art high, yet Thou hast respect unto the lowly; and we now approach Thee through Him Who has been, and Who still is, touched with the feeling of our infirmity.

Give us, therefore, confidence to draw near to Thee among those who would worship Thee in Spirit and in truth. We do not know what the future has for any one of us today; or tomorrow, or the next day, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. We pray, therefore, that we may be enabled so to receive Thy word this morning, and the promises of Thy grace, that in all the emergencies of life, whatever they may be, we may be equipped to meet them.

So do Thou bless a simple testimony of Thy graciousness this morning. Put Thine arms about this congregation, men and women, and boys and girls, and help us to feel, not merely to know as a matter of intellectual apprehension, but in our souls to feel that Thine arms are about us, and that Thou dost draw us very close to Thy wounded side. We would this morning hide in Thee, O Thou Rock of Ages, and find our refuge there.

Be gracious to those who cannot come to the sanctuary as has been their wont, who are prevented from coming by infirmity of age or by sickness, or by duties to others to whom they must minister. We thank Thee that Thou art everywhere present with Thy children, and that though we rest our heads upon a pillow of stone, yet it may be to us a Bethel, where the gates of Heaven are open, and the angels ascend and descend upon the ladder to our side.

So come to us now. We have a feeling, O Lord, that there are some here this morning who specially need Thy help! The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy. Find out our secret sorrows; minister to our hidden fears; control us in all our ambitions and aspirations; that all of life may be spent within the compass of Thy holy will. So help us, as we come to Thy word; open our hearts to an understanding of it. Shed light upon the sacred page, and make this hour an occasion of great blessing Lord to every one of us, for Thy Name's sake. Amen.

AS MR. SLADE and I were leaving the building late last night after the prayer meeting, I remarked to him, "I haven't even a text for the morning." Brother Jack Jones was within hearing, and he said, "Did you ever preach on this one? 'This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.'" I said, "I do not remember that I ever did." He said, "I had the office look it up, and there was no record of your ever having preached from that text in the index." I said, "Then I rather think I never have." As I drove home I thought, "Now that text just fits me at least, exactly; I think I could say something about that." And I thought very probably it would fit a number of other people, because there are plenty of poor people in the world, and there are plenty of people of all sorts, who are in all kinds of trouble, and people of every rank and condition need to learn how to cry and be heard and be saved.

So we will think out loud this morning, and turn over this simple but yet greatly profound text for a little while.

I.

It begins with THE STORY OF A POOR MAN. I am always interested in reading the stories of poor people. If I were to write a story book I think I would make the hero of my tale a poor man. So many, you know, take us out of the realm of reality, and spin stories about people who are fabulously rich, and we dream about the impossible. But God has had a favour toward the poor. The Bible is full of promises for poor people, and this is the story of one poor man. Somebody said, "The Lord must love common people, because He has made so many of them." I hope we include ourselves in that category. We shall never be too poor to receive help from the Lord.

This man, you see, *gave himself that title*. You have read often in the Gospel by John of "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and I daresay you have assumed that the Lord had shown some special favour toward John, and that he was generally known among the disciples as the one whom the Lord specially loved. Nothing of the kind. Nobody ever said that of John but John himself. John gave himself that title, and I have always been glad he did. I can imagine John's saying to himself, in respect to all his fellow-disciples, "Call yourselves what you like; as for me I am the disciple whom Jesus loves." It is well to know your own name, and to be able to give yourself a true title. Now this man, whatever he was called by other people, called himself a poor man, not any poor man, nor every poor man, but he was very personal and direct. He says, "This poor man cried," and I imagine he must at that time have been especially aware of his poverty.

I wonder if you are poor. There are some people who like to put on airs, and carry themselves as though they owned the earth. It is natural with some people. I have a hard time when I go shopping. I do not know why, but when I go shopping they always show me the most expensive things in the store. I do not know whether or not they think I look as though I ought to be able to buy them, but if so, they are greatly mistaken. It is not always easy to say, "Have you got something a little cheaper than that?" Oh, no, we should like to be able to go in like a millionaire and buy whatever we like. At the same time it is very necessary that we should recognize our limitations, and the limits of our resources, and when we find that we are near the end of things, say, "I am very poor." "Blessed are the poor in spirit," the Lord said, and it is a good thing to know that we are poor.

Now *spiritually we are all poor*. It is a constant wonder to me that anyone should ever be disposed to boast in the presence of the Lord. I was at a funeral yesterday, and I saw a lot of lovely flowers. I had a mind even to pluck one of them, and say, "You think you are of some value before God; you think you have some skills of importance. Could you make that?" How feeble are all our efforts when they are compared with the works of God! The fact is, dear friends, we are poor; we have got to the end of our resources. The prodigal went away from home a measurably rich man, because he was his father's son, and his father had divided unto him his living. But it didn't take him very long to go through it all, and to come to the bottom of his pocket, if he had

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

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one, and "when he had spent all he began to be in want." I suppose we have providentially to be reduced very often to just such a condition before we learn how necessary it is that we should have access to God. It was not until the corn was spent, and Jacob had heard that there was corn in Egypt, that he sent his sons down thither. When they came back with sacks full they were temporarily satisfied, and it was not until the sacks were just about empty again that Jacob said, "You will have to go back to Egypt and buy us some more corn." In the Lord's Prayer we are taught to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." I do not suppose many of us are satisfied with that; we should rather be like the prodigal and have our portion of goods.

I knew a man who had been an actuary of one of the prominent Insurance Companies. He had served them for many years, and he was retired at last from active service with a liberal annuity. But being an actuary he worked out his expectation of life as from his present age, and he went to the Company and said, "Now my expectation of life is so long. Supposing you give me my annuity covering that period in a lump sum." He had been a highly placed officer of the Company, and they consented, and on that basis of reckoning they gave him all that he might have had had he lived according to his actuarial expectation for a certain number of years. He thought he was very clever. He thought, "Now if I have that amount of money all at once I can invest it, and I can soon be a rich man." But he did what a great many other foolish people have done — he invested it in the wrong thing, and very soon it had all slipped from him, and he was without his annuity, and without his capital.

I suppose that is what most of us would do, and so the Lord gives us, not an annuity, but a daily supply. "Give us this day our daily bread." That is true particularly on the spiritual plane. He undertakes to supply us. His grace is ever according to our need.

It is worthwhile looking into the history of this poor man, and trying to ascertain what his trouble was at this

particular time, and why this poor man should have especially felt his poverty. He was none other than David the king; it was he who had slain Goliath; it was he upon whose head the anointing oil had been poured, and was to reign over God's Israel. But as yet, Saul was on the throne, and David was without in desert places, fleeing from the vengeful anger of a jealous Saul. He came to Abiathar the priest, and said to him, "I haven't a sword; I haven't a weapon. Is there any sword you have here that you could let me have?" The priest said, "Yes, we have one wrapped in a linen ephod here; it is the sword you yourself used to cut the head off Goliath." And David said, "Give me that, there is nothing like it." And so he went armed with the giant's sword, and he left Israel and went to Gath to find asylum with the Philistines. God's people do that sometimes. They find life so hard among their own people, even among fellow-Christians, that temporarily they are inclined to run away to the land of Philistia and see if they cannot do better there.

But when David got there Achish and his servants said, "Is not this David? Was it not said of him, 'Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands'?" And he found he was unwelcome among the Philistines. Apparently he had no place that would offer him cordial hospitality. He was as a man without a country, though he had been anointed king. I do not wonder that he felt pretty poor just then. "I have no access to my inheritance at all; they do not want me at home, and they do not want me abroad. What shall I do?" Have you ever felt like that? We have a phrase—"Like a fish out of water." I suppose you have all felt like that some time, just as though your environment were not agreeable to you, as you were not agreeable to your environment, and altogether you felt you had come to the end of the road, and you were a poor, poor man. Blessed is he who finds that he is spiritually and morally poor, that he has spent all and he cannot help himself. He has no strength to labour, no skill to increase his wealth whatsoever, and he recognizes that he is a poor mendicant.

II.

We have here the STORY OF A POOR MAN IN TROUBLE, and there is nothing extraordinary about that. "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward." We have all had our share of trouble, haven't we? It is common to mankind, and especially to poor people. You may magnify the advantages of poverty if you like, but that is a matter of theory with any one of us. We do not want to experience it. It is very inconvenient, and very distressing, to be poor; to need a thousand things, and to be without the wherewithal to purchase them.

However, *there are some troubles that are inherent in ourselves*. There are some people who are always in trouble, because trouble is always in them. They haven't to look for trouble; they carry it about with them all the time.

I remember a man in my church when I was in London—a very fine man sometimes; a very gentlemanly fellow. His wife was a splendid Christian. Every little while this brother would get out of sorts, and as we say, he would "climb the miff tree". There would be something wrong,—nobody knew what it was, but it was wrong anyhow. So I talked with his wife one day, and I said, "Mrs. So-and-So, you know how I value your fellowship, but if your husband is not happy here how

would it be if you were to take your letters and go to some church where he would be happy?" She said, "Pastor, your predecessor, Dr. Johnston, gave me that advice again and again. He said, 'If you are not happy here why don't you go where you will be?'" But she said, "We didn't for the reason I at least knew that we should take our miserable selves with us."

Some people carry their troubles about with them. They are always in trouble because trouble is always in them. Have you read the story of the Quaker who, standing on the crest of a hill, was approached by a stranger with a pack on his back? Looking down on a village in the valley he said to the Quaker, "What sort of people are living down there in the valley?" "Well," the Quaker said, "what sort of people did thee leave behind thee?" "They were dreadful people. That is why I left them, I wanted to get away from them." "Aha," said the Quaker, "and thee will find exactly the same kind of people down there." Of course he would. He was a man who carried his troubles with him.

Where and when that is true we need some remedy that may be applied within, or else we shall always be in trouble, and never get out of it.

There are *some troubles that are domestic*. Some troubles are occasioned by our greatest joys. Parents have them. They would not part with one of their children for all the world, and yet every one of them may be a cause of anxiety. Their greatest joy and their greatest trouble are all wrapped up together. Perhaps you think it is strange that you have a little domestic trouble. I have known men who had "wife trouble". Did you ever hear of that? And I have heard of women who had "husband trouble". That is not uncommon. But there is nothing new about it. Abraham had wife trouble, and Sarah had husband trouble, and both of them had trouble with their children. Isaac was a very peaceful man, not war-like at all. I do not read of his having any quarrel with people without, but he had a little difficulty between Esau and Jacob; he had it in his own home. Then Jacob had twelve sons. How rich he was! When he came back from his sojourn with Laban he said, "With my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands." But the two bands were too many for him, and his chief trouble was with his children. Joseph had some trouble, but his chief trouble was with his brethren. Moses had trouble, and his chief troubles were his own brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam. This David had plenty of trouble domestically, and much of it before he had a home of his own was with his brothers. And later he had much trouble with his children. These domestic troubles you find all through the Bible; you find them in life generally, and it is perhaps the most difficult of all troubles. A man who has a little paradise in his own house; who opens his door and goes in, and leaves his troubles without, is a happy and fortunate man. Some of us know that. But there are some who do not. As often as they cross the threshold of their own house they go home to trouble. What are we going to do about it?

There are *some troubles that are incident to the path of duty*. A good many of David's troubles he might have escaped if he had not been so faithful in the fulfillment of his duty. That is rather hard sometimes. When we do what is right, and we are sure we have done what is right, and just because we have done what is right, we have got into trouble. We always get into trouble by

trying to do what is right, but never in so great trouble as you will experience when you do what is wrong.

There are *some troubles that seem to be causeless*. "Why had that to happen?" you say. "I do not know. I cannot blame anybody. I am in a peck of trouble, but I do not know how it happened." It seems to be part of the Providential order. Man is born to it, and we need not expect to escape it. It is enough to say that we shall find trouble of some sort. Perhaps you will say, "Why do you talk to us about trouble of a Sunday morning?" I remember years ago when I went to London we couldn't find a house, and so my wife and I went boarding until we could get a house. We found a very nice place; they didn't keep boarders, but they kept a few select "paying guests". You know that is a kind of euphemism employed to cover up the poverty that necessitates our earning our own living. Well, there was a daughter of that house, and she was a very austere and proud sort of young woman, more akin to vinegar than honey, I always felt, sharp and acid in her demeanour. But one Sunday at luncheon I said to her, "You were at church this morning?" She said, "Yes I was." I said, "You had a good time I hope." "No, I didn't." I said, "What was the matter?" She said, "The preacher talked of nothing but 'debt, debt, debt,' all the morning. I do not need to go to church to hear about debts. I get plenty of that without going to church to hear about it." That may be so with many people; at all events we can hear plenty about trouble without coming to church, and perhaps you say first of all, "Whatever possessed the Pastor to remind us of our trouble? I went to church hoping I might be able to forget it, and the first thing he does is to remind us of our trouble." It is a good thing to be reminded of things of which you may be relieved.

III.

So we have here a story of A POOR MAN WHO CRIED. We used to have a man who was a bit of a nuisance in our prayer meetings. He used to come with elaborately prepared essays, of which he delivered himself in the form of prayer. Sometimes they were very good. One of our men was in the public library one day, and he found this brother in a chair with books of public prayer all around him, and he was making notes; he was getting ready for the prayer meeting, so he would have his little prayer oration to deliver! Maybe I have referred to him before, but I remember one was a discourse on Leviathan. He had a deep voice, and he spoke of "leviathan, the only creature which Thou hast made without fear." He had been wandering about in Job a little. Another time I remember he took us into the

forest where the birds were singing, and then he paused and said, "O Lord, we thank Thee for the percolating power of a sunbeam." Well, that is something to be thankful for, but it wasn't prayer at all. Perhaps you would try to pray if you could deliver yourself of a finished essay in the form of prayer, but that was not what this man did. He just "cried".

That is the best kind of prayer — when there is something urgent; there is something that requires special attention, and we cry — whether it is fire or something else. "This poor man cried." Did you ever hear a child pray? We are just like the children you know.

"An infant crying in the night;
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry."

That is all we can do sometimes — just bow before God and cry. Did you ever do that? I have many a time. I have had to tell the Lord, "I do not know how to pray; I do not know what to pray for; I do not know what my special need is. I only know that this poor man just now is in deep trouble. Lord help me." I am glad that the Lord does not require a fine literary production when we pray. You perhaps say, "I cannot pray." Well, if you cannot pray, cry, and if you cannot cry, shout or groan. But let the desire of your heart somehow become articulate. "This poor man cried." I have heard some men pray like the Boston preacher, of whom the papers reported that it was the most eloquent prayer ever delivered to a Boston audience. It did not touch me; I could not say "Amen". But I have heard some people pray who trampled the King's English in the dust and broke every grammatical rule, but somehow or another got out what was in. He cried, and I felt I could say "Amen" to that prayer. Oh, my dear friends, just as a mother hears the cry of her children, our Heavenly Father hears our cry.

I heard the great Dr. Jowett once in a sermon refer to the woman who came saying, "If I may but touch the hem of His garment I shall be whole." And he imagined somebody's saying, "But sir, I do not know how to touch Him." Dr. Jowett said, "Tell Him you do not know how to touch Him; that will touch Him." Oh yes, tell Him you do not know how to pray. That is prayer. We need only to cry. "This poor man cried."

IV.

AND HE WAS HEARD. Did you ever hear them say over the radio, "Keep tuned to this station; something else is coming on." I know I used to do that when Mr. Churchill was to speak during the war. I kept tuned to the station, and sat there waiting to drink in every word, and had it all ready to catch the first syllable of that great man's address. Now let me tell you that the ear of the Lord is always attuned to the cry of the poor. You do not need to change the station at all. "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him." I went into a garage some years ago with my car. I had a little bit of a squeak or a rattle, I forget what it was, and I asked them to find it. He shook his head, and said, "I do not know, but I will do the best I can. Do you see that car over there?" "Yes." He said, "A man just brought it in a little while ago. It has at least two hundred rattles, but he has just discerned the first of the third hundred, and he has asked us to identify it. To us," he said, "it

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is all rattles, but he may have detected a new sound, I do not know." Well, you motorists know if there is anything wrong when you are driving, because you know the pulse of your machine. The baby is lying in the crib talking to itself, and chattering away, playing with its toys. Mother is about her work, but suddenly she drops everything and rushes to that crib. Why? The baby cries. This is something new. What is the matter? She takes the baby up in her arms to find out what is the matter. Yes, we make a great many noises, but when we really cry from the heart our Heavenly Father knows the cry of His children.

"If earthly parents hear their children when they cry,
If they with love sincere their varied wants supply,
Much more will He our wants supply,
And answer when His children cry."

All that I want to make clear to you is that this business of prayer, of calling upon God, is not an esoteric affair, that is something that belongs to the initiated, somebody that is in the sacred secret. No, no, it is just as simple as a child's cry, and every one of us can pray. "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come." So we had better come now.

And that is especially true when indeed *we need that greatest of all gifts*; when we have discovered that perhaps the main cause of all our trouble is the sin that is within us.

I heard Paul Rader several times, and he was as interesting as any comedian. He told us he was left alone one evening with the baby. The baby began to cry, and he thought it had hurt itself. He looked for the cause, and he undressed it, and dressed it; he thought there were some safety pins or something scratching it. But he couldn't find the cause, and the baby still cried and cried. He took down all the ornaments and said, "Now play with them," but it didn't make any difference. The baby continued to cry, as he said, "Bawling its head off." At last he got to the end of himself, and he went to his neighbour, who was a mother of a family, and he said, "Can you come and help me? I cannot silence this child, and I don't know what in the world is the matter with it. It has been crying by the hour." So she came in, she took the baby up and clasped it to her breast, and the baby got hold of her ear. "Ah," she said, "where is the bottle?" The trouble was, you see, the baby was hungry, and this poor mere man didn't know how to interpret the cry of a hungry child.

Perhaps you do not know what is the matter with yourself. You cry and cry, but the Lord knows that you are hungry. You need His ministration, and if you just call upon Him He will hear you.

There were two men that went down to the temple to pray, and one prayed very eloquently and very elaborately. You remember — "I thank Thee that I am not as other men are . . . or even as this publican." Then he told the Lord all the good things he did. The publican wouldn't lift up his eyes unto Heaven, he was in such desperate trouble. He cried, and all that he said was, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and he went down to his house justified. Oh, if you haven't cried that cry, cry it this morning; if you haven't presented the needs of your heart to the great Saviour, tell Him you want to be saved, tell Him you want to be saved now. "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

I haven't said very much. I have just been thinking

a little out loud, and talking about your experience and mine. But I would just hang this text as a bell in the belfry of your memory, so that it may keep on ringing all the time. Can you remember it? "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles."

You go to a doctor, your own doctor, a great physician. And he says, "But this isn't my job; I will send you to the best surgeon I know," and he sends you off somewhere else. Or after he has examined you he says, "I think the trouble is in your teeth. You had better go and see your dentist." I know of one man, a College President, and he was as lean as Pharaoh's kine. He went to see his doctor, and he said, "I do not know what is the matter with me." He had a long drawn out face, and the doctor said, "What are you eating?" He said, "That is my trouble, I cannot eat. I just eat a little melba toast." The doctor said, "Bosh! Go home and ask your wife to get you the biggest beef-steak she can buy; cook it well with lots of vegetables and gravy, and sit down and fill that empty starved stomach of yours, and you will be all right." "But doctor, that would kill me." "It will kill you if you don't. There is nothing the matter with you." These dietitians,—what a nuisance they are when they insist you live on raw food and strained nothingness! "And be sure you do not miss your proteins and your starches!"

A man came to see me—I do not think he is here this morning—but he came to see me one day, and he said, "I just wanted to tell you that you are killing yourself." I said, "How is that?" "With what you eat." I said, "How do you know what I eat?" "Well," he said, "I guess you eat like other folks." I said, "What is wrong with the way I eat?" He said, "You are eating cooked foods, and you ought not to. Any food is ruined by being cooked. You should eat raw foods." I looked at him, and mentally I observed, "If it would make me look like you I am going to shun that," for he looked as though he hadn't had a crumb for a month. "Well," he said, "I do not approve of it, but if you must eat meat be sure you have it boiled, never roasted." I said, "Do you believe the Bible?" He said, "Certainly I do." I said, "Do you believe it is divinely inspired as the word of God?" "Yes sir, I do." "Well then," I said, "did you ever read this, a direction to the priests? 'Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire.'" He didn't know that that was in the Bible. You can have your corned beef and cabbage if you like, but I do not want any of it; I want it roast with fire. But however, this doctor told this college president—I suppose he knew a lot about Greek and Hebrew and Latin and French and German, and Philosophy and Science, and I know not what else, but he didn't know how to feed himself. He was starving himself to death because he had a food fallacy complex.

Very well then, go to your physician. Cry to Him: "Lord I have got trouble, heart trouble, stomach trouble, all kinds of trouble." I expect He will say, "You are not eating enough. Get back to the table of the Lord; nourish that starving soul of yours on the word of the Lord until you become fat and well-fleshed, and then you will be a walking advertisement of the power of Jesus Christ to make people sound and safe and happy."

V.

Let us cry unto the Lord every one, and HE WILL SAVE US, NOT OUT OF SOME OF OUR TROUBLE, BUT HE "SAVED

HIM OUT OF ALL HIS TROUBLES." Our Lord Jesus is an expert in everything. When you come to Him you come to the greatest departmental store in the world, and you will never have to go outside the door to get all you want, no matter what it is. Let this poor man cry and get the answer. Let us pray.

Mr Slade: We thank Thee for Thy word, O Lord, that we have heard this morning, for the great truth that whosoever will call upon Thy name shall be saved. How many of us have thus cried in our need! Thy Holy Spirit has made us conscious of our need. We pray that, as we have thus meditated, Thy Holy Spirit shall brood over every heart, and cause us to see that we need Jesus Christ above all; we need forgiveness for all our sins; we need everlasting life.

So we pray that Thou wilt bless each one of us. Instruct us by this truth, and may it lead every one of us to cry that cry which will be heard in Heaven, and bring down just the answer we require, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

SEMINARY GRADUATES' REUNION

LAST week in Toronto Baptist Seminary developed, without premeditation or design, into a kind of informal Graduates' Reunion. The Board Meeting of our Missionary Committee brought a number of friends and former students from distant churches to the city, and we were happy to welcome two of them to our chapel services. Mr. D. G. Aceti has been a warm friend of our cause ever since its inception, and we all profited by his clear and vigorous message. The example he gives us of a successful business man turned missionary is an inspiring one. Rev. Walter C. Tompkins who has laboured with much blessing in Fort William for the past eleven years made us all feel what a great thing it is to be a Christian and that we should all be better Christians than we are. And we consider that is good preaching for theological students.

Then on Thursday evening, on the happy suggestion of some of our local alumnae, a number of graduates gathered in the Seminary Dining Room for a time of fellowship with the present student body as their guests. It was a very successful gathering from every point of view. To begin with a point that was not the most important, nor yet the least important, the food was excellent—better than in the days when we called our cook a "chef" and not just a "cook", as we now do. Then the speeches were all mercifully short and the programme informal, and there was time for fellowship before and after dinner. Our Seminary Quartet sang in English and in French, as it does for the weekly French broadcasts, and words of greeting mingled with amusing reminiscences of the student days at the Seminary were brought by Messrs. Slade, Tompkins, Macgregor, Adams, Aceti, and Mr. H. Maw spoke on behalf of the Trustees' Board.

In the regular Thursday evening meeting, a further surprise awaited us, for Dr. Shields had asked three of the graduates to speak. Revs. John Byers of Victoria Avenue Church, Hamilton; Rev. W. C. Tompkins, of Fort William Church; and Rev. Duncan Macgregor of First Baptist Church, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario; each brought a message. Altogether it was a time of blessing for the Seminary family and its loyal friends and supporters to see and hear these representatives of a large company of faithful men and women who were trained in the Seminary and are now ministering in the far corners of the earth. Through them and their helpful and inspiring messages we caught a new glimpse of

the far-reaching work being carried on through this truly missionary enterprise.—W.S.W.

DR. SHIELDS IN KENTUCKY

DR. SHIELDS is at present fulfilling an engagement in Marion, Kentucky, in connection with the Annual Bible Institute of the church there. As announced in these pages some three weeks ago, this engagement was made some time before his recent trip to Florida. On Sunday the following wire was read to church and Sunday-school, from which we presume that the Editor is not allowed to find time hanging heavy on his hands:

MARION, KENTUCKY

HAVE HAD A VERY COMFORTABLE TRIP BY TRAIN AND PLANE WITH THE PROSPECT OF A VERY HAPPY TIME IN A WEEK OF DELIGHTFUL FELLOWSHIP WITH THE PASTOR HERE. MORNING AND EVENING SERVICES SUNDAY, AND THREE SERVICES A DAY FOR THE REST OF THE WEEK. MY LOVE TO THE WHOLE CHURCH AND SCHOOL. LET US PRAY FOR EACH OTHER DAILY. PASTOR

In the pastor's absence, the pulpit of Jarvis Street Church was occupied by Rev. Walter Tompkins of Fort William, who preached in the morning, and by Rev. H. C. Slade, the associate pastor, in the evening. Both services were seasons of rich blessing in the ministry of the Word. Mr. Tompkins was converted in Jarvis Street Church, was baptized by and married by Dr. Shields, and, as he remarked, he always considers this church and its pastor as his own in a peculiar sense.—W.S.W.

MRS. ELIZABETH ELLEN LINDSAY

We cannot live always, and few of us would care to live very long, even if we could; but when God's children reach the evening time — some are permitted to sit up till near midnight — He gathers them home to Himself. Such an one departed to be with Christ. "which is far better" on Wednesday, April 4th, in the person of Mrs. Elizabeth Ellen Lindsay, the mother of our highly-honoured, and greatly beloved Secretary, Miss Georgina Lindsay.

For a number of years Mrs. Lindsay had been without her hearing, but even when she could not hear, as long as she was able, she attended the House of the Lord, where she could worship personally, and where she could set an example to others. She was a quiet, faithful, servant of the Lord, who served her own generation by the will of God, and then fell on sleep; and all her children call her blessed.

Notwithstanding an advanced age, there is always such a gulf between life and death that it is impossible for any of us to be wholly prepared for it. Therefore THE GOSPEL WITNESS extends its sympathy to Miss Lindsay; and to all members of the family.

MISS LUCY GIBBONS

Another member of Jarvis Street, for some years a resident in Victoria, B.C., reached the end of her pilgrimage, and passed on to glory on Sunday, April 8th. Miss Gibbons, with her friend, Miss Jessie McClellan, who predeceased her by several years, were loyal members of Jarvis Street Church, and devoted Christians. Miss Gibbons came from Australia, and so far as we know, had no relatives in this country.

ENGLISH PRINCESS VISITS ITALIAN POPE

PRINCESS ELIZABETH was received in private audience last Friday by the Pope of Rome. News dispatches failed to give any inkling of the topics of conversation discussed during the twenty-five minute interview, though a Vatican spokesman reported to the press that the conversation was "cordial and animated". We can think of a number of topics that must have been in the back of the minds of both the Protestant Princess and the Italian pope as they met each other. After quoting the press report of the visit, we shall mention some of them together with the reasons for our deepest regret that the Princess and her advisers should have seen fit to allow this divisive and controversial gesture.

The Press reported the matter in the following dispatch:

Princess in Black, Pope White Just Faint Touch of Lipstick

Vatican City, April 13—(UP and AP)—Pope Pius XII received Princess Elizabeth and her husband the Duke of Edinburgh today in a 25-minute private audience conducted in English.

The Protestant Alliance in London immediately announced its "deep regret" that the princess visited the head of the Roman Catholic Church rather than the Pope calling on her.

The royal couple sat on white leather chairs, and the pontiff, dressed completely in white even to soft white slippers, sat on a raised platform in his private library.

The Protestant princess wore a black silk gown reaching almost to her ankles and a black lace veil. Her make-up was light, with just a faint touch of lipstick. Prince Philip was dressed in his Royal Navy uniform.

A Vatican official said the conversation was "cordial and animated".

The Pope presented the princess with an engraved medal commemorating the 12th anniversary of his coronation last month.

He asked after the royal couple's children and sent his respects to the King and Queen. It was the sixth visit in 50 years of members of the British royal family.

Merely a Courtesy Call?

Some well-intentioned persons will, of course, assert that the royal visit was merely a courtesy call, entirely devoid of either religious or political significance. If that be so, we must ask, why was it made? Princesses of the blood royal do not ordinarily make state visits without purpose or plan, even on notable personages. Nor is the Supreme Pontiff likely to set the wheels of his propaganda machine in motion months in advance of the event if it were fruitless from his point of view.

Supposing the Princess Elizabeth were to fly to the Kremlin and spend twenty-five minutes closeted with Stalin, attended by the same fanfare of publicity from the communistic propaganda department, would it then be considered a mere courtesy call? We can see as little reason for a member of the royal family visiting the red tyrant of Moscow as for visiting the black dictator of Rome.

The Policy of Appeasement

There are those who will tell us that the mission of the Princess was purely political and that it was not intended to express any favour toward the religious organization of which the pope is the sovereign head. These enlightened and sophisticated persons will doubtless have little patience for our attitude, which they will

brand as narrow and short-sighted, if indeed they do not employ stronger epithets than these. We meekly resign ourselves to being made the butt of such criticisms, secure in the knowledge that English History demonstrates again and again the truth that the papacy has never contributed anything but dissension and strife to Britain, either before or after the Reformation. It was concerning the "meddling priest" that our Shakespeare penned these words:

"This England never did, nor never shall,
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
But when it did first help wound itself."

Before the Protestant Reformation, England was a convenient source of income for the papacy that it exploited to the utmost limit. English law and English history bear record to the intense resentment which papal claims and papal exactions aroused even in Roman Catholic England. Since the Reformation, the papacy has been the avowed foe of Protestant England and the pope's friends are always England's bitterest enemies.

The Duty of the Royal House To Be Above Party Politics

Even on the supposition that the Princess' visit to the pope can be explained as a purely political expedient, the suggestion gives us pain that the King's daughter, the future Queen, should stoop to play petty politics. We are not surprised that ward-heelers should engage in tortuous, political ways, for some of the basest corruptions in the political life of Canada and the United States, as well as in Latin America, have sprung out of attempts to placate the priests and those whose votes they are reputed to control. In the English system of government, the King is kept above the exigencies of party manoeuvrings, and even the mere suggestion is humiliating that a member of the royal house is stooping to appease a foreign prince, the head of what in the British Commonwealth is a minority sect that has ever been the prolific source of dissension and disloyalty.

The Pope Is the Associate of Axis Gangsters

The world is still reeling from the wounds it suffered in the bloody struggle with the Axis powers. Let it not be forgotten that Hitler was a Roman Catholic and that he was helped into the saddle by a concordat with the pope; likewise Mussolini was a Roman Catholic whom an Italian Cardinal named the "man of destiny" and who was aided and abetted by the pope's political benediction in the form of a concordat; Franco, the last remaining Axis dictator, has been repeatedly smiled upon by the papacy and is regarded as the leader of a new crusade for the Church of Rome; Perón, another Roman Catholic, who recently shocked the democratic world by a ruthless suppression of a great voice of freedom, also seized power by the aid of the Roman clergy. To strike hands with the pope, even as a matter of political expediency and with the best of intentions, tends in some measure to lead prestige to the friend and ally of men of sin and men of blood. With all loyalty and in the spirit of meekness we venture to quote to the Princess and her advisers the admonition contained in the First Psalm: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

It is true that the great Queen Elizabeth dissembled and dallied with the papacy for some fancied advantage

of the moment, but in the end what did she gain but a reputation for questionable sincerity? The real strength of England through which she beat her enemies down in that distant day were the English hearts of oak, men whose convictions were formed through the reading of the open Bible, men who resented as indignantly as we do in our day, any suggestion of compromise with the pope of Rome and his minions.

"That Smooth-Faced Gentleman, Tickling Commodity"

We repeat that the assertion that the Princess' visit to the pope was merely a piece of diplomacy is by implication to expose the members of the royal family to the charge of expediency in politics and of insincerity in religion, for it is impossible to draw a line that will separate between the papacy as a temporal power and the papacy as a religious institution. Again we quote from Shakespeare in which the following shrewd comment is made on a king whose guiding star was expediency — or "commodity" as Shakespeare named it in his day:

Mad world! mad kings! mad composition!
 . . . that same purpose-changer, that sly devil,
 That broker that still breaks the pate of faith,
 That daily break-vow, he that wins of all,
 Of kings, of beggars, old men, young men, maids . . .
 That smooth-faced gentleman, tickling commodity,
 Commodity, the bias of the world.

We should be reluctant, as we have already said, to lay such a charge against the Princess, but those who defend her action on the grounds of political expediency are guilty of doing so by implication. For us, religious convictions are too sacred to play with, it is near to blasphemy to make them into political pawns, and we fail completely to understand the conception of diplomacy that would toy with the eternal destiny of men's souls as though it were like any other merchandise that could be bought and sold on the market place to the highest bidder.

Why a Romanist May Not Sit on the English Throne

On the other hand, we find it impossible to believe that the Princess has any sympathy with the peculiar dogmas of Romanism. In other days kings have sat on the British throne with secret or avowed love of Rome until their unhappy and perfidious reigns brought such bloodshed and civil commotion that Englishmen resolved, in the sad light of bitter experience, to render it impossible for a Romanist ever again to sit on the throne. It was no momentary wave of bigotry that prompted our ancestors to write this provision into their laws, but the hard-learned lesson of bloody persecution and internecine strife, joined to the threats of foreign vassals of the papacy. Surely the next incumbent of the throne is not unaware of the dearest bought lessons of our entire history. We cannot believe that Elizabeth has any sympathy with Romanism in any form, and we therefore regret that she has accepted advice which implies such a position in the eyes of the world.

The Pope Elevated Above the Princess

Why did the astute priests of the Roman curia welcome, if they did not invite this visit? The answer is not far to seek. The genius of Romanism, inherited from its pagan predecessors, is for pomp and ceremony, which the priests well know has tremendous value in impressing and shaping public opinion. What an eye-filling scene was provided by the black-robed Princess, the future queen of England, her fine, tall young husband in the uniform of

the Royal Navy, and the white-robed pope seated on an elevated platform. Here is abundant material for press and radio and television, it may be, to work upon in conveying the impression of the honour and esteem in which the royal house of England holds the papacy. The popular imagination will seize upon this avidly, and prince and peasant, Englishman and Spaniard, will lay hold upon this picture as a symbol of the relative positions of England and the papacy.

Chamberlain and his umbrella journeyed to Munich to meet Hitler. The English delegation alas, were also the ones who journeyed to seek the Italian prince in Rome. The world at large can scarcely be blamed if it sees them playing the rôle of the suppliants for papal favour. Whether royalty travels to the pope at Rome or at Canossa, it goes to the pope's elevated throne and the implication is plain for all to see. Again we note that the dispatch from Rome was careful to inform us that it was the pope who occupied the elevated platform, not English royalty. How true to form the arrogant papal pretensions ran even in this detail. When Elizabeth and Philip saw the raised platform on which the pope was seated, they must have seen on its sides, unless they are entirely ignorant of papal claims and papal history, the ghostly hand of a long-buried pope writing the famous words of his bull: "The one sword, then, should be under the other, and temporal authority subject to spiritual." We detest the thought of an English princess being subjected to such humiliating terms at the hands of an Italian priest.

An Affront to Protestants

The papacy well knows that the visit was an affront to the Protestant conscience and the priests of Rome are not so far removed from ordinary human feelings as to find their appreciation of the tribute paid to them all the more enhanced by that fact. Only fifty-five years ago one of the pope's predecessors, Leo XIII, uttered the following unsparring condemnation of the Anglican Church, of which his distinguished visitor may one day be head: "Since the sacrament of ordination and the true Christian priesthood has been utterly cast out of the Anglican rite . . . so no episcopacy can be truly or rightly conferred . . . And so . . . we pronounce and declare that ordinations performed according to the Anglican rite are utterly invalid and altogether void."

We do not suppose that such questions as the above were raised during the twenty-five minute interview, for it is no use asking a supposedly infallible pope if he has changed his mind. But again we suggest that the caustic remarks about the invalidity of Anglican orders must have been present to the minds of all persons in the papal library on that occasion. Nor, on the other hand, could the resounding sentences of the Articles of Religion have been entirely silenced in the mind of the well-informed Supreme Pontiff: "A fond thing vainly invented . . . blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits . . . the Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this realm of England . . ."

What purpose could be served by the discussion of such controversial points as those referred to above? And on the other hand, what use is there in persons of such contrary views meeting each other unless they do discuss them? Are we to suppose that the whole time was taken up with a solemn deliberation on the weather or with extended enquiries about the Princess' children and the health of the various members of the royal family?

England Prospers Under the Pope's Curse

England was never stronger than when the pope cursed her, and we should be more confident of her future security and of her material and spiritual welfare if the pope were uttering new curses against her instead of fraternizing with members of her royal family. As a matter of historical record we print following this article, the Papal Bull which pronounced and declared another royal Elizabeth as "a heretic, and a favorer of heretics . . . to have incurred the sentence of anathema, and to be cut off from the unity of the body of Christ." That bull has never been withdrawn or annulled, for the authority from which it emanates boasts that it is infallible. In spite of the thunderous sound of this solemn papal curse, England had never prospered before as it did under the same Elizabeth. Of such small potency are the pope's mouthy curses. Of such little worth is the friendship and benediction of the present incumbent of the papal throne.

At the risk of being considered impracticable, we venture to cite the political principles of an ancient idealist who, in difficult days when a great and mighty enemy hung over his land like a shadow of death, laid down in these words the line of conduct to be followed for deliverance from the foe: "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord! . . . Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him" (Isaiah 31:1, 36:6). The greatest need of England and of the Empire, of United States and of all the democracies, greater than all alliances and united nations, greater even than increased armaments and atom bombs, is a sincere repentance and turning to God. We heartily wish and pray that in that holy pilgrimage the lead might be taken by members of the royal house of England, whom we honour and respect not only for their high office but for their high living and high thinking.—W.S.W.

HOW TO DEFY THE DEVIL

"Let us sing," said Luther, "the forty-sixth Psalm, and defy the devil." The devil's restless nature is fretted by the serenity of the firm believer in God; and let him be fretted. His utmost rage is insufficient to hurt a single hair of the head of a believer. No adversary can carry by storm our impregnable stronghold. Tyre stood a siege of thirteen years, but our fortress has been beleaguered throughout the ages and never captured. Security itself is our portion for time and for eternity when we trust in the Lord. I love to think of the child of God as getting into God, and resting secure beyond the evil designs of the malicious hand, the crafty mind, and the slanderous tongue. No stone will be left unturned to do us ill, and yet no stone of our rocky habitation shall be dislodged. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn." The trials of life shall not harm us; the bereavements of death shall not cause us to despair; sickness shall help on our sanctification; poverty shall increase our wealth of experience. When God blesses, nothing curses. If God be for us, who can be against us?—SPURGEON

THE POPE CURSES ELIZABETH

The Bull of Pius V, *Regnans in excelsis*

This ferocious papal bull was issued by Pope Pius V in 1570. He called upon the Roman Catholic nations to carry out the threats it contained and thus its promulgation was the signal for almost continuous warfare against England by France and Spain until the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. Though this celebrated missionary expedition was armed with the papal thunders whose text follows and though it was provided with inquisitorial instruments of torture for its religious mission of converting the heretical English, it failed miserably and led to the eventual ruin of the proud Spain, already weakened by its servility to Rome. Read in the light of subsequent events, the fulminations of the haughty pope against the heretical queen are pathetic when they are not laughable.

"Pius, bishop, servant to the servants of God; for a perpetual memorial of the matter.

"I. He that reigneth on high, to whom is given a power in heaven and in earth, committed one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, out of which there is no salvation, to one on earth, namely, to Peter the prince of the Apostles, and to Peter's successor, the Bishop of Rome, to be governed in fullness of power. Him alone he made *prince over all people and all kingdoms, to pluck up, destroy, scatter, consume, plant and build*, that he may retain the faithful that are knit together with the bond of charity, in the unity of the spirit, and present them spotless and unblamable to their Saviour. In discharge of which function, we, who are, by God's goodness, called to the government of the aforesaid Church, do spare no pains, laboring with all earnestness, that unity and the Catholic religion, which the Author thereof hath for the trial of his children's faith, and for our amendment, suffered to be exercised with so great afflictions, might be preserved incorrupt.

"II. But the number of the ungodly hath gotten such power, that there is now no place left in the world, which they have not assayed to corrupt with their most wicked doctrines. Amongst others, Elizabeth, the pretended queen of England, *a slave of wickedness*, lending thereunto her helping hand, with whom, as in a sanctuary, *the most pernicious of all men have found a refuge*; this very woman having seized on the kingdom, and monstrously usurping the place of the supreme head of the Church in all England, and the chief authority and jurisdiction thereof, hath again brought back the said kingdom into miserable destruction, which was then nearly reduced to the most Catholic faith and to good order. For having by strong hand inhibited the exercise of the true religion, which Mary, the lawful queen of *famous memory*, had by the help of this see restored, after it had been formerly overthrown by Henry VIII, a revoler therefrom, and following and embracing the errors of heretics; she hath removed the royal council, consisting of the English nobility, and filled it with obscure men, being heretics, hath oppressed the embracers of the Catholic faith; *hath placed impious preachers, ministers of iniquity*, and hath abolished the sacrifice of the mass, prayers, fastings, the distinction of meats, a single life, and the Catholic rites and ceremonies; hath commanded books to be read in the whole realm, containing manifest heresy and impious mysteries and institutions, by herself entertained and observed, according to the prescript of Calvin, to be likewise observed by her subjects; hath presumed to throw bishops, parsons of churches, and other Catholic priests out of

their churches and benefices, and to bestow them and other church livings upon heretics, and to determine of church causes; hath prohibited the prelates, clergy and people to acknowledge the Church of Rome, or obey the precepts and canonical sanctions thereof; hath compelled most of them to condescend to her wicked laws, and to abjure the authority and obedience of the Bishop of Rome, and to acknowledge her to be sole lady in temporal and spiritual matters, and this by oath; hath imposed penalties and punishments on those who obeyed not, and exacted them of those who persevered in the unity of the faith, and their obedience aforesaid; and hath cast the Catholic prelates and rectors of churches into prison, where many of them, being spent with long languishing and sorrow, have miserably ended their lives.

"III. All which things, seeing they are manifest and notorious to all nations, and by the gravest testimony of very many so substantially proved, that there is no place left at all for excuse, defence, or evasion; we seeing that impieties and wicked actions are multiplied one on another, and moreover, that the persecution of the faithful, and affliction for religion, groweth every day heavier and heavier, through the instigation and means of said Elizabeth; because we understand her mind to be so hardened and indurate, that she hath not only condemned the godly requests and admonitions of Catholic princes concerning her healing and conversion. but also hath not so much as permitted the nuncios of this see to cross the seas into England; are forced of necessity to betake ourselves to the weapons of justice against her. not being able to mitigate our sorrow, that we are constrained to take punishment on one to whose ancestors the whole state of Christendom hath been so much bounden.

"IV. Being therefore supported with his authority, whose pleasure it was to place us, though unequal to so great a burthen, in this supreme throne of justice. we do, out of the fullness of our apostolic power, declare the aforesaid Elizabeth being a heretic, and a favorer of heretics, and her adherents in the matter aforesaid, to have incurred the sentence of anathema, and to be cut off from the unity of the body of Christ.

"And moreover, we do declare her TO BE DEPRIVED OF HER PRETENDED TITLE TO THE KINGDOM AFORESAID, AND OF ALL DOMINION, DIGNITY, AND PRIVILEGE WHATSOEVER. And also the nobility, subjects, and people of the said kingdom, and all others who have in any sort, sworn to her, TO BE FOREVER ABSOLVED FROM ANY SUCH OATH, AND ALL MANNER OF DUTY, DOMINION, ALLEGIANCE AND OBEDIENCE; as we also do by the authority of these presents absolve them, and do DEPRIVE THE SAME ELIZABETH OF HER PRETENDED TITLE TO THE KINGDOM, and all other things above said. And we do command and interdict all and every the noblemen, subjects, people and others aforesaid that they presume not to obey her or her monitions, mandates, and laws; and those who shall do the contrary, we do innodate with the like sentence of anathema. And because it were a matter of too much difficulty to convey these presents to all places wheresoever it shall be needful, our will is, that the copies thereof, under a public notary's hand, and sealed with the seal of an ecclesiastical prelate, or of his court, shall carry altogether the same credit with all people, judicial and extra-

judicial, as these presented should do, if they were exhibited or showed.

"Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, in the year of the incarnation of our Lord 1570, the fifth of the Calends of May, and of our popedom the fifth year."

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 16 Second Quarter Lesson 5 April 29, 1951

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

JACOB AND ESAU

Lesson Text: Genesis 25:19-34.

Golden Text: "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."—2 Corinthians 4:18.

I. The Brothers: verses 19-28.

Before Abraham, the friend of God and the man of faith, passed away, he gave all that he had unto Isaac (Gen. 25:5). This speaks to us of our Saviour, the well-beloved Son, upon whom His Father bestowed everything that He had (Heb. 1:2). Isaac inherited not merely the property of his father, but also the spiritual promises made to his father (Gen. 21:12; 26:4, 5).

Just as the faith of Abraham was severely tested while he waited for the son of promise (Rom. 4:16-21), so, too, was the faith of Isaac tested. Clinging to the promise that his father's seed should be as the stars in multitude (Gen. 26:4), for twenty long years he waited for a son. He seems to have waited patiently and obediently in faith, however, without interfering with the plan of God, as did Abraham in a similar situation (Gen. 16; 17:18).

The twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah were given in answer to their united prayer (1 Pet. 3:7). Isaac had "intreated the Lord" and Rebekah "went to inquire of the Lord." Children are a heritage from the Lord (Psa. 127:3) and bring a solemn responsibility to their parents (Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:1-3).

As we look upon the little children, tiny, frail bundles of life, we have no way of knowing what they will become in later life. We can only imagine and conjecture. The Lord revealed to Rebekah, however, the fact that each of her sons would become the progenitor of a mighty nation (Gen. 17:16; 24:60). Jacob was the one through whom the Israelites were descended, and Esau was the founder of the Edomites (Gen. 36:1, 43), frequently mentioned in Scripture (Numb. 20:14; Josh. 24:4; Jer. 25:21; Amos 1:11, 18). One of these nations, Israel, was stronger than Edom, even as the Lord had said. This would not be an unusual state of affairs in itself, but the implication is that the one nation would enjoy the favour of God, rather than the other. The third prophecy to the effect that the elder would serve the younger is contrary, however, to the law of nature (Gen. 27:29; 40; 48:17-19; Rom. 9:11); the Edomites were compelled to acknowledge the superiority of Israel (2 Chron. 21:8).

The two sons were totally unlike in appearance. Esau was ruddy, robust and rough, whereas Jacob was paler and smooth of skin (Gen. 27:11). They differed also in occupation, pursuits and habits of mind and life; Esau was a cunning hunter, but Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents (Gen. 27:3, 5). Favouritism on the part of the parents, which is unwise and sometimes disastrous, drove the brothers still farther apart (Gen. 27:5-7).

II. The Birthright: verses 29-34.

Esau's name means "Red," and the name "Jacob" signifies "Supplanter" (Gen. 27:36), an appropriate name, for he deprived his brother of the birthright and also of the parental blessing.

Jacob had made some soup from small beans or lentils, possibly from the beans which came from Egypt, a delicacy perhaps not tasted before by Esau. The savoury stew led Esau, the tired hunter, to request a portion of the soup.

Jacob was quick to seize the opportunity for a bargain and offered to sell the soup to Esau in return for the birthright. The rights and privileges of the eldest son included the priesthood of the family (Exod. 4:22) and a double portion of the inheritance (Deut. 21:17).

Esau made the mistake of failing to take time to ponder the path of his feet (Prov. 4:26; Hagg. 1:5). He should have considered well before making a decision which was to affect his whole life. Use this lesson to point out the importance of right choices (Josh. 24:15; 1 Kings 18; 21; Eccl. 12:1).

Esau made a wrong calculation, inasmuch as he had not a proper sense of values. He magnified the importance of satisfying his natural appetite, and failed to appreciate his spiritual privileges (Rom. 13:14; Gal. 5:16-22; 6:8; Phil. 3; 18, 19). He looked to the present, rather than to the future (Lk. 12:15-21); to the things that are seen, rather than the things that are unseen (2 Cor. 4:18). Thus, he is described as a "profane person,—who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright" (Heb. 12:16); he was carnally-minded (Rom. 8:5-14; Jas. 4:4; 1 John 2:16, 17). It will do one no good to gain the whole world and lose his soul (Mk. 8:36). Esau, like Judas, had his price (Matt. 26:15).

Jacob does not appear to better advantage than Esau on this occasion; we cannot admire his meanness and cunning. Moreover, he need not have used his own ingenuity to help the Lord bring about the promises. So far as God was concerned, Jacob's place in the chosen line was already assured (Acts 15:18).

Although from the human standpoint Jacob was unworthy at this stage of his life, God had chosen him by His own sovereign will, whereas He had rejected Esau (Mal. 1:2, 3; Rom. 9:8-16). Jacob succeeded in life, not because of what he was, but because of what God had determined concerning him. In our flesh dwelleth no good thing, and by grace alone can we be saved (Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16; 3:26; Eph. 2:1-10).

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

- April 23—Jacob Loved of God Rom. 9:8-13.
- April 24—Esau Hated of God Mal. 1:1-5.
- April 25—Jacob Steals the Parental Blessing ..Gen. 27:1-29.
- April 26—Esau's Remorse Gen. 27:30-44.
- April 27—Jacob Vows a Vow Gen. 28:10-22.
- April 28—Reunion of Jacob and Esau Gen. 33:1-7.
- April 29—Jacob and Esau Bury Their Father Gen. 35:27-29.

SUGGESTED HYMNS

Lord, I hear of showers of blessing. O Christ, in Thee my soul hath found. Yield not to temptation. Jesus, I my cross have taken. Oh, hear my cry. Dying with Jesus.

"HOW SLIPPERY CAN THEY BECOME?"

A subscriber who is a Presbyterian Pastor in a large American city writes:

March 24, 1951.

The Editor, THE GOSPEL WITNESS,
130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto, Canada.

Dear Sir:

The other day I dropped into a local bank to cash my cheque and a "poor priest" stepped aside and counted off a stack of Twenty Dollar bills. Naturally my heart bled for the poor fellow who must subsist on so little that he cannot afford to pay income tax. This matter was made more acute due to the fact that about a week before the rest of us had to file our own tax form.

Then I came across the attached article, or excerpt rather, which added more fuel to the fire of my indignation. The "better distribution of wealth" to which he makes reference might suggest that this classic blood-sucker is insatiable.

Pope Condemns Class Struggle

Pope Pius XII recently reiterated Roman Catholic belief in "the right of private property" but called for a better distribution of wealth. In an address broadcast to a workers' assembly in Madrid, the pope con-

demned the concept of class war but said it is contrary to nature that "an enormous mass of impoverished people" should live "in front of a small group of rich and privileged." . . .

On the local scene something very interesting is happening which may interest you. The local Catholic (Roman, that is) Hospital is currently making a drive for a Million Dollar building fund. Protestants will donate at least 50 percent of this for the dubious privilege of being proseletyzed when they are admitted as patients. But the cute twist to the story is that when the Million Dollars is raised (and \$600,000 has been pledged or collected in the past month), the Federal Government is to grant an additional Two Million Dollars, of which non-Catholic taxpayers will pay about 1½ Million. All of which leaves me soliloquizing, "How slippery can these characters become?"

Sincerely,

(Signed)

ONTARIO DOES NOT WANT LEGALIZED GAMBLING

The following editorial from *The Toronto Star* of April 17 is a good answer to the insane and wicked suggestion of a former Cabinet Minister of this province who was also, briefly, Prime Minister. It is not surprising that men who in office permitted increased liquor consumption and handed over more and more public money to Separate Roman Catholic Schools should now advocate that gambling be permitted to wear the borrowed robes of legality and respectability.

Not a Liberal Policy

Mr. Gordon Conant, former premier and attorney-general of Ontario, who retired recently as master of the supreme court of Ontario to practise law at Oshawa, last night made an address to the Rotary Club at Belleville. In the course of it he referred to legalized gambling as a possible answer to the problems which illegal gambling involves. Before a provincial law with that end in view could be enacted, an amendment to the British North America act would have to be secured.

It is a proposal to delight the heart of Premier Duplessis of Quebec. Mr. Conant apparently did not commit himself to it definitely, and it is to be hoped that his former prominence as a Liberal leader will not leave the impression that this is a policy of the Liberal party. It is not. Nor should it be. Mr. Conant cites the liquor control act as a parallel. But everyone knows that liquor drinking has vastly increased under it, and the revenue obtained by the province has become a barrier to genuine control.

The federal parliament, which has jurisdiction in this matter, has a number of times refused to sanction the legalization of gambling. What is needed is not legalization, but a more strict enforcement of the anti-gambling laws.

THE BOOK OF THE AGES

The Bible is the one book of the age, nay, of the ages, —of all ages and all climes. Man's present unbelief seeks to loosen its authority, to dilute its statements, to render indefinite its doctrines. But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. God is not man that He should lie. His word is sure, His truth is everlasting, His book is like the sun in the firmament; a light for all ages and lands.
—HORATIUS BONAR.

THE NEED OF REVIVAL

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,
on a Sunday Morning.

(Stenographically Reported)

"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."—Isaiah 59:1, 2.

I SHALL speak to you this morning about the need of revival, here and elsewhere. Very early this morning one of our members telephoned me and asked me to come over. She said, "My husband thinks he is going home to-day, and he wants to see you." I went over to see him about seven o'clock this morning. He was able to talk; and in a very happy mood he said, "I am ready to go, I think it will be to-day; but there are some things I want to talk to you about before I go." He talked about the joy of the Lord, and of his assurance in Christ. He said to his wife, "There must be no tears. We are Christians, why should there be? I am going home." Turning to me he said, "You know, when God speaks, that settles everything for me. There is no argument at all, and I am resting in that. Will you read me a little?" So I took the Book and went back to the fifty-third of Isaiah and other passages, and every passage to which I turned, I found marked. We read about the many mansions. Then he said, "I think the Lord is coming very soon. I will be going home before He comes, but when He comes I will be with Him, so be on the lookout for me." I said, "Shall I read about that?" He said, "I wish you would." Then I turned to some of the promises of the Lord's return, and I found them all marked. He said, "I think you will find nearly all the promises of His coming marked in my Book." It was a glorious half hour I had with him this morning. The salvation that is in Christ is so real, I could not help feeling that I must speak of matters of deeper concern, of more abiding moment, than even the interests of our glorious nation. "Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

The Old Testament prophets were not often sent with comfortable messages. A man who is supposed to view life somewhat gloomily, is usually described in our day as "Jeremiah"; but they who thus speak do not know the mission of that great prophet, for after all he was a prophet of truth, and his somewhat melancholy task was to tell the people of his day that they had forsaken God. And no man, and no nation, can ever forsake God without paying the awful price of being forsaken of Him. I state the melancholy fact that there are literally scores of churches into which people will go to-day where they will hear not one solitary word about sin and salvation, no message that will bring men face to face with God; where there is not absolute denial of the realities of the Christian religion, there is the substitution of a mere humanitarianism for the gospel of the grace of God.

Surely it must be admitted that all churches urgently need a divine visitation. In this place we believe the Book, we endeavour to preach it, and to teach it; we believe in prayer. But there is just the possibility of a kind of spiritual pride taking possession of the hearts of the people, and of our becoming smugly complacent, and

flattering ourselves that we are living in the fulness of the power and blessing of the Lord. But I am sure that we here in Jarvis Street, every one of us, need a very special visitation from God. And if there are any of you who think you do not, if there should be anybody here this morning complimenting himself on having attained some high spiritual state, then you need the revival most of all! We all need it, and this text which I have read to you this morning assures us that spiritual blessing is still available, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear."

Very much of the record of divine grace is written in the past. There is a retrospective view of this text: it implies that men have had experience of God's faithfulness in hearing their prayers; and then they have seen something of His mighty power when His hand has been outstretched in the salvation of men. Let me remind you of days gone by. Let us pray that we may remember the days of old, in order that we may be able to say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." It is well to tell the story of His benefits, and to remind ourselves of what God has done in days gone by, and of what our fathers have told us of His mighty works in their day.

The record of this Word is that it is possible for men to communicate with Heaven, that the ear of God is attentive to the cry of the believing heart. There was a time in human history when men longed for commerce with Heaven, and they said, "Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name." And they set about the building of a tower, hoping, by human effort, to establish a means of communication with the Sky. And the Babel builders have been many. In all ages of the world's history men have sought by their own efforts to get into communication with God, and to bridge the distance from earth to heaven from the earthward side. That is the heresy of all heresies to-day, even among many professedly orthodox people: they try to persuade themselves that they can build a tower up which they may climb to talk to the ear of God, and, standing upon their own merits, invoke the aid of the hand of God. But it is a vain fancy, it always ends in Babylon, in confusion, in utter human defeat.

There is a better story of a traveller leaving home, who lay down one night with a stone for his pillow. This traveller dreamed a dream, and he saw, not a tower but a ladder; and while it rested upon the earth, the top reached to heaven. It was a ladder let down from the sky, it was not a ladder that was reared upon earth; and up and down that ladder the ministering angels, in his vision, ascended and descended. Our Lord Jesus Himself told us the significance of that, for He said, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." He is the Ladder, He is the Way, He is the Telegraph Office, the Telephone Wire, the one and only Way of communicating with God. The ear of God, through Jesus Christ, has been open to the cry of men from the beginning; for the Old Testament saints, like Jacob, got in touch with Heaven by means of that Ladder; they prayed through the merit of Him Who was yet to come.

Let us look at the story. What is the record of the Bible? *It is the record of answered prayer.* What is the Bible written for? It is written to tell men that the

unseen God, Whom we cannot see and cannot touch, is real; and that it is possible for us to hold commerce with Him, to speak into His ear, and move His hand. What differentiated Abraham from his contemporaries? Just this, that he was a man of prayer, that he communicated with God, that was the difference, — "So Abraham prayed." He prayed for Lot, and "God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt." Lot was saved by the "hand of the Lord"; and the hand of the Lord was moved for Lot's help by the prayer of Abraham which entered the ear of the Lord—the man upon earth invoked the powers of Heaven for the deliverance of a human soul. That is the record of the past.

What was the difference between Jacob and Esau? An amiable character was Esau, dutiful toward his parents, generous toward his brother; on the natural plane, having many qualities which distinguished him as a man of character—and yet utterly profane, a man that never had communicated with the ear of God. Jacob—poor, sinful, wretch that he was—was yet redeemed at last because he prayed; and at the end of his life he was able to say, "The Angel"—he had seen angels coming down the ladder, and when he looked upon his life in retrospect and saw how wonderfully he had been led, how rebellious he had been, and yet how touched with grace at every point—"the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." That is the record of Genesis.

It is the same story when you touch the life of Moses. Moses was a man who had access to the ear of God. Moses prayed, and because he prayed, the plagues descended; Pharaoh was stricken; the sea was parted; a nation was born, and fed, and nourished, and sustained; and at last, though by another hand, brought triumphantly into the land of promise. But the distinguishing feature of the whole Hebrew religion is that it is a religion that has found its way to God, and is a proof that God has come into human life in salvation. I know it is popular nowadays to laugh at the sun's standing still at Joshua's command. Napoleon, as he saw the sun westerning on the famous and fateful day of Waterloo, apostrophizing the sun, said, "What would not I give for the power of Joshua to retard thy flight for one short hour!" Nevertheless the day was too short, and his empire was destroyed. But our glorious God works in the amplitude of eternity, and He can command the sun to stand still by human lips. I have no hesitation in subscribing to what the Bible says, I have no doubt about it, and I am not at all sure that the astronomers are as exact as they suppose themselves to be.

Time would fail me to touch upon all the outstanding characters of the Old Testament. "When Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house." That was the characteristic of David's life also: it was a life lived in communion with God; the ear and the hand of God were factors in David's life. Then there is the outstanding case of that man of iron, that man who was not afraid of the face of kings, that man whose very name stands in our thought as a synonym for the combination of all masculine human qualities, the man who feared nothing on earth or in hell, Elijah. The distinguishing characteristic of Elijah, according to the New Testament, was that he prayed—not that he preached, not that he was a fearless prophet, but that he prayed that it might not rain;

and he shut up the heavens for three and a half years. Then he prayed again, and the rain descended. You remember that story—it is a refreshment to our spirits even to recall it—when God answered Elijah by fire, the ear of God and the hand of God again on Carmel.

So on down through the New Testament. Our Lord Jesus was a Man of prayer; He came to exemplify that fact. He was the very incarnation of the Godhead, and men talked to Him, and He heard them, and answered their prayers. He Himself talked to God in such a way that His disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray."

We have studied for some time the Acts of the Apostles, and I remind you that these two principles go together on every page of the divine record: man speaking into the ear of God, and moving the hand of God. That is how revival came in apostolic time—and since that time. The record is not closed with the conclusion of the Acts of the Apostles. The history of the Christian church is a history of prayer, and of the divine performance in answer to prayer. Call the roll of the great heroes of the Cross: Knox, who made the sovereign tremble on her throne; Luther, who, by means of prayer, broke the iron fetters that bound the men of his day. Think of the Wesleyan people, think of the Moody days, of the great days of Finney, of Spurgeon, and of hundreds of others. And, best of all, think of yourself. It all means nothing unless you have had a personal experience of it.

Did you ever reach the ear of God? Did you? Did you ever reach the ear of God by your cry? How do you know? A friend told me he was in the great Tabernacle once in the days of Spurgeon, and he heard that mighty man of God pray something like this: "Bow down Thine ear, O Lord, for we are poor and needy"; and then he said, "Just a little closer, Lord. Bow down Thine ear a little closer, that we may whisper our desires into the ear of God." Have you ever seen a father stoop down and listen to his little child, as the child whispered his secret into the father's ear, and you saw by the play upon the father's countenance that the prayer had found its way home? Did you ever have your Father in heaven do that for you, just bow down His ear? And you have said, "I am positive I have talked to heaven to-day." How did you know? Because immediately the hand of God appeared in your life, and He did something for you that nobody else could do. What a day that was when He heard our prayer for pardon!

My brother, you may be a member of the church, but you are not a Christian if you have not had the experience of the luxury of talking with God for yourself. Years ago we had in this church a dear man of God, a Russian Missionary, Mr. Kolesnikoff, and his wife, who was a wonderful woman of prayer. They used to take Slavs into their home to try to lead them to Christ. There was one man who came, and Mrs. Kolesnikoff preached the gospel to him. He did not yield, but said to her, "You pray for me?" "Yes, I will pray for you." Day by day she prayed for him. At last he said to her one day as he had said before, "You pray for me?" "No," replied Mrs. Kolesnikoff, "I will not." "What, you no pray for me?" "No, you will never be saved until you pray for yourself." In sheer terror of being left alone, he got down on his knees and began to pray, and found the ear of God was open, and very soon he felt the touch of the hand of God. The burden was rolled from heart and conscience, and he was set free from sin.

This is a commonplace for you Christians, but go back again and think of your spiritual birthday,—

"O happy day, that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Saviour and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad."

If you have not talked to the ear of God, then you are not saved; but if you are saved, you have had experience of this truth, that a man or woman, utterly unworthy, can yet reach heaven and move the hand of God.

I could go on and remind you of many experiences since that day. I give it as my testimony, that the most real things in life to me, as I recall them, have been God's distinct and unmistakable answers to prayer. I do not care what anybody says about this Book. For myself, if all the preachers, and all the professors on earth, and all the churches, and all you people, were to turn against it, and say it is not true, I should pity you all and say, "I know it is true. I have spoken to God, and He has answered." And I would not be here to-day if it were not true. Go back now over your history, Christian brother and sister, and give God thanks. You have not time to count them all, but give God thanks for the innumerable instances in which, in answer to your poor prayers, the hand of God has touched you, and you know that the distance is spanned, and that earth and Heaven are married and are for ever one.

I could recount the story, the miraculous story, of blessing in this church. Ah, if there is a church—I have no desire to magnify this church—but if there is a church anywhere on earth that would be absolutely without excuse at the judgment day for departing from the living God, it would be this church, God has witnessed to His faithfulness in this place so many times. He has done for us what no mortal power could do, that we are of all men most sinful if we forget His benefits. It is the thing I fear above everything else, that we should allow anything to obscure our vision of the goodness of God on the collective ministry of this church.

Yes, there is a record of the past; but, blessed be God, the reservoirs of grace are undiminished. Can you say hallelujah about the present as of the past? "The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear." When my friend Dr. Dixon was preaching for me here once some years ago, he said, "Can you recommend to me a good ear specialist? I think I am getting a little deaf." I replied, "Yes, I believe I can take you to one." So I took him to a specialist and left him at the office. After a while I returned for him and said as he came out, "Well, what did the doctor say about your hearing? Can he do anything for you?" "Oh," said Dr. Dixon, "he just looked at me and smilingly said, 'Anno Domini'."

I remember my dear friend and predecessor, Dr. Thomas, telling me years ago of a man who was a member of this church. He came to the services here morning and evening, and attended a Bible Class in another part of the city in the afternoon. One Sunday the Bible class teacher asked the members of his class if they could offer any suggestions as to how the life of the class might be made more interesting, and the sessions more profitable. This man's hair was white with age, and he was accustomed to sit with his hand to his ear. "Yes, sir, I can make some suggestions," he replied. "All right, let us have them, brother." "Speak a little louder, I cannot hear you very well. Even my own pastor does not speak

as loudly and as distinctly as he used to do!" He was perfectly unconscious that his ear was growing heavy. But though He be the Ancient of Days, and though it be true that from everlasting to everlasting He is God, His ear is not heavy; it is as acute as it ever was. You remember that wonderful description of declining human powers in the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes: "In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened. And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low; also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets." But not so with our glorious Lord. He can hear the whisper of a little child as easily to-day as He ever could. That is a simple observation, but I would have you remember that the ear of God is attentive still, and the hand of God is not shortened; He has the same power.

I know that it is quite out-of-date to believe that. I was thinking last evening of the inconsistency of unbelief. How flagrantly, how inexcusably inconsistent it is! How God is multiplying witnesses to the truth of this Word! And side by side with the multiplying evidences of its truth, men's hearts are becoming harder, and their minds more blind than ever. "Oh," says our so-called scientist, "it is of no use to pray." And the preacher reads his magazines and a few books, gets a smattering of these things; and he weaves them, with a lot of other nonsense, into his sermons, and his hearers get to feel that they must do everything. The prayer-meetings are closed, and the people cease to pray, because the preacher has taught them that it is no use to pray, that everything is fixed and inexorable, and it is no use to pray.

I remember years ago when Marconi first transmitted his electric signals across the Atlantic, I preached a sermon on wireless telegraphy. The sermon was published, and a man who saw it came to see me. I did not know who he was, but he said, "I read your sermon, and thought I would come to see you. Is your study in the house or at the church?" "It is in the house, it is right here." "Will you allow me to go to your study?" I said, "Certainly, I shall be glad to," and conducted him upstairs. "Will you tell me where you sat when you wrote that sermon?" I said, "Right there, sir." "This is the desk?" "Yes." "You did not know that you were thronged by spirits, did you?"—and I found that he was the leading spiritualist of the city! I told him I did not know it, and did not want to know it. But there is another sense in which every believer should become a medium of spiritual power. How far we have gone since that day! And this poor blind man that calls himself a scientist gets up in his class and says, "Gentlemen, it is no use to pray." Perhaps the next morning he says, "Did you read yesterday about that miracle, when four men in a machine weighing fifteen hundred—or was it fifteen thousand—pounds set off through the terrifically dense atmosphere, and mounted higher and higher until they were ten thousand feet above the sea, and for nineteen hours they saw neither land nor sea, but plowed their way through the dense fog; and, lost in that wilderness ten

thousand feet above the sea level, they tapped their little instruments and talked to the ships on the sea, and the ships on the sea talked to stations on land, and the stations on land talked to the newspapers, and the newspapers printed it; and in a few hours millions of people knew what was happening ten thousand feet above the sea!" Then the great man says, "That is science—that is science"—and if he had but a spark of enlightenment he would know that this Book is full of a profounder science than that; and that it has been telling men that God is, and that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. The ear of God and the arm of God, the one undimmed, the strength of the other undiminished, are still at the disposal of faith, blessed be His name!

Sinner, here in the preacher is one poor, guilty, bankrupt who confesses that by the abounding grace of God the books in the glory have been changed, and the record of his sins has been blotted out; he is a child of God, and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ, because when he had no money to pay the telegraph bill, he talked with God, and God did the rest. And there is no reason why any man or woman, boy or girl, should leave this building without having his or her sin blotted out, because God can save you.

I have been getting a great many anonymous letters recently—I used to get some that I did not read, just glanced through to get their tenor. I am thankful to say that I have not had that sort for years now—but I am getting anonymous letters from a great many broken-hearted men and women who say, "Once I knew the Lord, once I had an experience of His grace, but I have lost the joy of my salvation. Will you pray for me?" I do not exaggerate when I say—and I know many of you have the same experience—if I did nothing but take these requests before the Lord, I believe I would be busy all the time talking to God about broken-hearted men and women who want to get back home. What a blessing the way is open still to get back! Perhaps some are saying, "Ten years have passed, or twenty, since I have had experience of His redeeming power, and I am afraid I have gone so far that I could not get back again." Listen: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear." How far can His hand reach? How low? The arm of His redeeming grace can reach to the level of the nethermost hell and save an utterly lost and ruined sinner, lifting him to heaven. His hand, I say, is not shortened; He has done it ten thousand times, and He can do it still.

I wonder if there is any mother here troubled about a prodigal boy, or a prodigal girl? You say, "He is so far away." Yes, but we read of one who "took his journey into a far country". How far is that—as far as from here to the Coast? from here to China? as far as from here to Thibet? It is a good deal farther than that, it is a distance that cannot be measured geographically at all. Sometimes we speak of "the long arm of the law". A man commits a crime in England, and his description is sent throughout the world, and perhaps in some little town this side of the water he is identified, and at last he is brought into custody, and we see in the paper that "the long arm of the law" has found him. Yes, the arm of human law is long, but I would remind you the arm of divine law is very long, too; yet I praise God the arm of divine grace is longer still, and there is no far country that the arm of grace cannot reach, and there is no depth

of despondency into which a human soul can sink from which he may not telegraph a message to the ear of God, that, by means of the mercy-seat, he may establish communication with a country far away.

Do you believe that, that the ear and hand of God are at our disposal? There are some of you—I hope you all believe in the coming of the Lord, I hope you all do, but I hope none of you believe in the coming of the Lord in such a way as to find a melancholy delight in every bit of darkness you can discover. I say it frankly, I have not an infinitesimal spark of sympathy with the attitude of people who say that the world is so rapidly getting worse and worse, that it is useless to look for revival. There are some people who find satisfaction in every evidence of apostasy, and say it is a fulfilment of Scripture. So it is, and in spite of all our efforts, I know there will be a great falling away; but I can find no suggestion in the Book of the Lord that at any time before the Lord Himself shall come down the skies, He will have ceased to hear the prayers of His people, or ceased to move His hand in their behalf. There is nothing in the Scripture to say we should not pray for, and expect, revival. Who knows these are the days of the last apostasy? Lord Salisbury once said that much of the bad blood between nations was caused by the habit of certain statesmen of studying small maps. What he meant was that they had not learned to view things relatively. And there are people who have not studied the history of the church, who think there never were any dark days before. If we read the story of the Reformation, it is easy to believe that the world had altogether gone to the devil; and yet the hearts of the people were turned toward God. The days were just as dark at the time of the Wesleyan revival in England, and in the United States in the nineteenth century when deism was as rampant as Modernism is to-day—in fact, it was only Modernism in another form. Read Gordon's "Leaven of the Sadducees", and you will discover that there have been other days at least almost as dark as to-day. I do not know why a world-revival cannot come, for the ear of God is not heavy, nor is the hand of God shortened. He will come in His own good time, and He will put an end to the night and will bring the morning with Him; but it is for us to pray down God's blessing in our day; and if the darkness comes, let it not be because of our failure to testify for Him.

What about the prevailing unbelief? What about it? Is there any chance of its being lightened? I got a letter from a brother whom I highly esteem in the Lord; but he always has a pessimistic note in what he writes. He said, "What is the use of contending for the faith anyhow? I am glad, of course, that there are men who are faithful; but why not simply preach the gospel? You cannot do anything. Preach the gospel, and never mind about the rest." Do not warn anybody! It must have been a terrible day when Saul of Tarsus was loose like a beast of prey. That is a striking description of him, "Breathing out threatenings and slaughter". It reminds me of some modern professors and denominational secretaries, and a good many other people I have known. That is no exaggeration, and if the gentlemen were sitting here I would tell it to their faces. They are thirsting for blood, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" like the very breath of the pit. What is the use? It is no use, you cannot argue with Saul of Tarsus, you cannot convince the unconverted Saul of Tarsus. No, but the Lord God Himself can stoop from heaven and strike him, and

bring him to the ground in humble penitence, so that he will say, "What wilt thou have me to do?" Perhaps I have done my share of contending for the faith, but I shall do more. But over and above it all, I believe that nothing but the arm of God can do it. He can turn back the tide of unbelief, and bring in a day of revival.

Why do we not have it? The ear of God is listening, and the hand of God is waiting to open iron doors, to shake prisons open by an earthquake; "but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." And if you and I do not pray effectually, it is not because God cannot hear, not because His hand has lost its power; but it is because there is an interruption in the communication. His ear is waiting, but we are not getting to His ear because our communion with Heaven has been broken. I read one day of a whole city's being thrown into darkness suddenly. The main electric wires that supplied the town passed under a railway bridge, and were fastened under the bridge, and above there was an arc light. Sand flies, getting singed at this light, fell down between the railway ties on to the beam below, until a pile had accumulated, and falling down between the wires they caused a short circuit and threw the whole town into blackness — all through the aggregation of little flies. That is how people lose power. "We have done no great sin"—you do not need to do a great sin. You can grieve the Spirit of God a thousand times a day by refusing to do His commands, you may refuse to obey in such a way as to be without power wherever you go. "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear"; and if we are not getting the touch of the hand of God in

response to our cry to the ear of God, the difficulty is not with Him, it is with us. That is my simple message, over and over again I bring it, the preacher to his own heart, and to yours, all this is available to the people of faith, if only we yield ourselves to God.

Shall we ask Him to enable us so to do? Let us pray:

O Lord, we thank Thee that there is no storm that can come upon us, and no enemy that can beset us from without, that can sever our communion with Thee. We thank Thee that that is guarded. But oh, we can admit to our own hearts that which is alien to the Spirit of God, and we can bring ourselves out of fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We pray that we may search our hearts this morning, that they may be bared before Thee, and that these little things, these worldly pleasures, these indulgences, the habit of sitting at ease in Zion when we ought to be about our Master's business, the unkind and uncharitable thought cherished in the heart toward another, the unforgiving spirit, envy and jealousy, may, by the power of Thy Spirit, be put away, for these are the things that break the soul's communion with Thee. Restore unto every one of us, we pray Thee, the joy of our salvation. We ask it for Jesus' sake. Amen.

FOR TORONTO READERS

NEXT SUNDAY IN JARVIS STREET

DR. ROBERT McCAUL

11 a.m.—The Silent Angel

7 p.m.—Why Was Judas Called and Kept?

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