# The Gospel Witnes

PUBLISHED WEEKLY.

IN THE INTEREST OF JARVIS STREET BAPTIST CHURCH, TORONTO, AND OF EVANGELICAL TRUTH

> T. T. SHIELDS PASTOR AND EDITOR

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

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## The Iarvis Street Pulpit

"SO GREAT SALVATION."

A Sermon by Rev. E. E. Shields, Brantford, Ont.

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday evening, April 8th, 1923. (Stenographically reported).

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.
"For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;
"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miraoles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"—Hebrews 2:1.4

I. You will notice that we have here The Holy Ghost's Appreciation OF SALVATION'S SCHEME: HE CALLS IT A "GREAT SALVATION." sometimes amused by the high sounding titles which mortal men, breath is in their nostrils," take to themselves: the Imperial Grand Kleagle of the Ku Klux Klan is hardly more humorous than the Noble Grands and Worshipful Masters and Sovereigns and other titles which the various fraternal societies bestow upon their mighty ones. We rather smile at these things. But there are some titles to which we pay very great respect, and there are some things which are called great, which we generally consider to be really great. And we never think of the possibility that when we speak of "the great nations" they are after all not actually great. We think of the extent of their dominions, of the might of their power; and we speak of them as being "great." Yet the Creator of them all says that "the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance.".

 But the Eternal God Who speaks of the greatest things which men consider great as being in the total before Him but as a "drop of a bucket"-God, the Holy Ghost, speaks of salvation as a "great salvation." Perhaps He means it is great in respect to the antiquity of its plan. For the gospel was not an after-thought, nor a substitute for a law which had failed. You remember that Jesus said to the Jews, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." And Paul tells us that "the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." But the gospel plan was formulated long before Abraham, and before that glad day "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." When all we now behold existed only in the mind of God, when as yet there was no creation, the Creator, alone, God, the Triune, sat in solemn council and formulated salvation's plan. We read that Christ "was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." "Chosen in him," we read of the saints, "before the foundation of the world." The whole plan of Calvary, the whole scheme of redemption, all the promises which come to us in Christ from God—all these things were arranged, settled in the eternal covenant, before the worlds were. Perhaps it is in respect to that, in part, that the Holy Spirit speaks of salvation as a "great salvation."

And then, it may be that He declares salvation to be great in respect to the Person by whose mediatorial work salvation was wrought. We are told in this first chapter of Hebrews that "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." "In him," we are told, "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." The One Who died on Calvary was Jehovah, the Creator. The One Who spoke the Word in the beginning, saying, "Let there be light." He is the One Who died for human sin—the very God—"God manifest in the fiesh."

And it may be, also, that the Holy Spirit in speaking of salvation as a "great salvation" thinks of the Person by whose power the promises are promulgated—the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Godhead. "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will." When men come in touch with the gospel of God's grace, under the preaching of the Word, they are dealing not with men but with God. The message is of God; the message is brought by the power of God; it is God Himself, the Holy Spirit, Who comes to human hearts, Who convicts of sin, Who brings home the truth: it is the Spirit of Truth who makes the Word of Truth to live in the human conscience and the human heart.

It may be, too, that in speaking of salvation as a "great salvation," the Holy Spirit had respect to its downward reach.

It is surely a great salvation that could turn Saul the persecutor and blasphemer into Paul the preacher, that could change the man who was breathing out threatenings against the Church of God into a man who should breathe out blessings upon all men everywhere. This is the salvation that could stoop down and lift up Jerry McAuley, a salvation that contemplated all sin, so that in and through Christ "all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men"; a salvation that is able to make the foulest clean, that is able to make that man whose heart is black with sin—that is able to cleanse it and make him whiter than snow. This salvation is able to give power to live in a wicked world; facing all its temptations, the saints yet overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. You all have heard of Mel. Trotter, the Evangelist,

who over the dead body of his child, whose death his drunken spree had accomplished, signed a pledge, with blood drawn from his own veins, that he never—never—never would drink again; and within twenty-four hours afterwards he was rolling drunk! But the gospel of God's grace reached down and got Mel. Trotter, whose will was weakened through his excesses—the gospel of God's grace reached down and saved that man from sin.

Perhaps the Holy Spirit in speaking of redemption's work as a "Great Salvation" also has regard to the glory to which the blood of Christ and the grace of God in Christ Jesus shall bring those who repent and believe. We who believe in Christ are forgiven all manner of sin and blasphemy; but the believer in Christ is not only forgiven, he is justified; all the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed to him-is reckoned to his account. God as our Judge regards the sinner and Saviour as standing before Him. He takes the sin of the sinner and puts it upon Christ: "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." With His righteousness He clothes the sinner, and He regards that saved one as though he had never sinned at all; through the precious blood of Christ the redeemed stand before God's bar as clear of guilt as the unfallen angels. That is what justification means: it means that all the righteousness of the death of Christ is reckoned to our account, and we stand absolutely clear of guilt before the bar of God: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

And not only are we justified, but we are adopted, if you please, into the family of God. Yes, and not only are we adopted but we have the Spirit of Adoption. An adopted child may feel himself to be a stranger in his foster-father's house; but it is not so with the child of God. The Father makes us free of the household. He puts within us the spirit of sonship: "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father"—the very words—Abba, Father—which Jesus used in Geth-semane! The very Spirit of the Son is given to those who repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; who are brought into the same relation of sonship as is the Son Who redeemed us; in a certain sense we have His Spirit, and in some sense His relationship to the Father.

And we are not only sons, but we are heirs, "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." I know it is a marvel; I cannot understand it; it passes our comprehension altogether. I am sure we have never realized our position as sons of God; I am quite certain that we have not yet understood the meaning of "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? . . . Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne," is the Word of Christ.

Surely this is a great salvation that redeems us from all iniquity, that reaches down and snatches us as brands from the burning, that gets us when we are on the verge of hell, saves us, cleanses us, keeps us by the power of God, raises us from the dead by and by, and "presents us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy," "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but . . . holy and without blemish"! That is the plan of salvation in a word, that is the object of salvation; to present us in the likeness of God's Son at last, so that we shall live for ever with the Lord. The Holy Ghost's

estimation of this salvation, of which the world at large has little knowledge and which men are neglecting and rejecting, is that it is a "great salvation."

II. But contrary to that idea which seems to obsess so many men in the blindness and darkness of their hearts, This Salvation DOES NOT INCLUDE GREATER LENIENCY FOR THOSE WHO NEGLECT ΙT THOSE WHO NEGLECT OR REJECT THE LAW. On the contrary, it is implied in this text that the judgment will be proportioned to the light received, and that those who neglect this "great salvation" will, beyond all question, receive greater damnation. Did you ever notice those awful words of Jesus in the tenth of Matthew? "Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city." Sodom and Gomorrha were cities of such abounding iniquity that God could not suffer them to exist; He could not find ten righteous people there; He poured out His wrath upon them and blotted them from the face of the earth. And Jesus said that "it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment" than for those who reject this "great salvation"! "Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day." To the Jews He said, "The men of Ninevah shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here." The doctrine is clearly taught that judgment will be proportioned to the light received, and that the neglecters and rejecters of so "great salvation" cannot escape eternal damnation: "For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"

"III. This Text Suggests That There are Those Who Do Neglect "So Great Salvation." And I want to call your attention to the fact that it does not even say reject; but it says, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" It is not necessary positively to reject salvation: all that is necessary in order to fail of eternal life, in order to miss an entrance into the company of the saints—all that is necessary for any man born of Adam's race, with Adam's sin upon him, and judgment resting upon him, to do, in order to be lost, is simply to go on as he is, simply to fail to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. You may be as moral as you like, you may put on a cloak of respectability, but if you continue to neglect this "great salvation," you will go into outer darkness, eternally separated from God!

Now I want to suggest that it is probable that there are some here to-night who have neglected this "great salvation." I do not know how many there are who are without the Lord Jesus. I want by the power of the Spirit to press home the claims of the gospel. You have no right to go out of any one of those doors unsaved. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." God has no promise of salvation to anybody here for to-morrow. He calls you to-day; He will save you to-day; He will save you this very hour if you accept this salvation. How old are you? Are you fourteen? Then you have had two solid years of Sabbath days; when you could not go to school; you were not allowed to work; you have had every opportunity to attend Church and Sunday School. Are you twenty-one? You have had three years—as long as some men take to learn a trade; indeed, it is longer than a lot of men take in these days! You have had three years' of Sabbath days if you are twenty-one. And if you are twenty-one here tonight, and unsaved, you are without excuse before God's bar. You have had three whole years in which you were not allowed to work, unless in exceptional circumstances. As all the churches were open, think of the opportunities you have had of knowing the way of life and accepting Christ! You may say that you have not positively opposed yourself to the truth of God; you have been friendly in your heart towards the established churches of the land; you have been glad to praise those, perhaps, who were standing for truth. But have you yourself come to the Lord? Have you repented and believed on Him? Are you twenty-eight? Then you have had four years of Sabbath days. Or if you are thirty-five, you have had five years. If you are forty-two you have had six years. If you are forty-nine you have had seven you have had say years. If you are tolty-line you have had seven years of Sabbath days. And you have not taken advantage of them, if you are here to-night unsaved: you have neglected this "great salvation." This message does not speak here of rejecting it, but simply neglecting it, simply going on without God. What opportunities have you had? Is your wife a Christian? Do you know that she prays for you? Or, is your husband a Christian? Do you know that he is praying for you? Has your wife, or your husband on the case way he speaks to you they the case have been to your way they can have the same has a speak at the case way he speaks to you they can have be speaked as the case way he speaks to you they can have be speaked. husband, as the case may be, spoken to you about Christ? Do you know that it is the desire of his or her life that you should come to Jesus and find salvation? Has the Christianity of the other partner in the home created an atmosphere there which is favourable to your coming to the Lord Christ? Then, what is your responsibility before God in comparison with one in an utterly godless home? Your responsibility surely is greater. Possibly there are some parents here—sometimes the little children lead the way—possibly there are some parents here whose children have found the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is the testimony of their lives and the prayer of their hearts that you shall be saved. Perhaps you know in your inmost heart that it is the one desire of their hearts that you should come to the knowledge of Jesus. What opportunities have you had? Have you lived in this gospel land all through life? Have you had the gospel clearly explained to you? Have you had a godly Sunday-School teacher who has taught you and prayed for you? Have you had these opportunities, and have you come to this hour without a knowledge of Jesus Christ? Then can you say that you have not neglected this great salvation? What do you think about chiefly? What is your main purpose in life? What is the chief desire of your heart? In what channel are the currents of your life flowing? How are you living at this time? Are you seeking God? or, Are you going away from God to-night? Are you neglecting this "great salvation?"

IV. LET US "LISTEN IN" AND HEAR THE HOLY GHOST'S QUESTION TO EVERY UNSAVED SOUL—IF YOU NEGLECT SO GREAT SALVATION HOW SHALL YOU ESCAPE? If you have neglected salvation, if you are determined to continue to neglect this salvation, then it is a question of the utmost importance to you to know how you are going to escape if you neglect God's only remedy. The indictment is clear before Heaven's bar: you "have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"; "the soul that sinneth it shall die"; "sin is the transgression of the law"; "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight"—no possibility that anything you may have done, even though it may have seemed to you to be a good work for the time being—no possibility that that can have any value

before the Bar of God. Now, when that day comes to which the whole creation moves; when "The Books" are opened, and all men are "judged out of those things which are written in the books, according to their works," can you justify yourself before God? Is it possible for you to prove that you have not broken God's law? Or, in the second place, if you cannot so prove, if you admit your guilt, if you admit that you are a sinner before God, then what have you to plead in extenuation of sin? what are the circumstances which you can plead before Heaven's bar which will weigh with the court of last resort? Are you a sufficiently accomplished advocate to win the Judge of all the earth to your view? Can you deflect the course of eternal justice? Can you plead your case effectively before the bar of God? If not, then "how shall you escape, if you neglect so great salvation?" If you cannot thus justify yourself, if you cannot argue your own case, have you some saviour other than Jesus? As you have up to this hour rejected the Lord Jesus Christ, have you somebody else whose blood will be efficacious, whose blood is of sufficient value before God, who will die and whose sacrifice will be accepted in payment of the penalty of violated law? Have you another sacrifice, as you have rejected thus far God's one and only sacrifice? Or, if not, if then you have no price in your hand for your own salvation, unsaved one, then will the gods whom you serve deliver you in that great day? There is something you worship; there is something about which your heart is entwined; if you do not know Christ, there is something that is the dominating purpose of your life; there is something else that you love supremely in place of God. Will the gods whom you serve deliver you "in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ?" If not, how shall you escape so great damnation if you neglect so great salvation? Can you match your strength with God? "Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?" In the day when "the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books are opened, and the dead are judged out of those things which are written in the books, according to their works," can you match your strength with the Almighty, and overcome the Judge of all the earth, and prevent the execution of eternal wrath upon the rejecters and neglecters of this "great salvation"? Then, how will you be saved if you reject God's one, last. only remedy? If God has sent His Son, and He can find no other; if He comes to you in the power of the Holy Spirit; if He gives you light and opportunity and friends to pray with you, and an open Book;; and you reject all this—then how will you be saved? "If the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?"

Some people are going to be placed on the left-hand side; some people will be subjects of the wrath of God; some people who have heard and somewhat understood salvation's plan are going to reject it and neglect it and go on to eternal perdition. Are you? Are you? How much longer will you wait? How many times more will you reject the offer of salvation? There is coming a last time, there is coming an hour when the last church service will be held, when the last sermon will be preached, when the Holy Spirit will operate upon the heart and conscience of the last sinner for the last time. We are rushing on to the close of this age, however far away it may be; we are rushing on to the inevitable end. There will be the last chance, the last call. It may be to-night; it may be that you will never again have an opportunity to turn and live, to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; it may be now or never; it may be that if to-night you reject the Holy Spirit and go out unsaved that the Spirit will move upon your heart no more. The last opportunity does come to men. There have been those who have gone out into the dark, shricking that they were lost! They have left their testimony to the awful fact that it is possible to reject the Holy Ghost finally to the eternal undoing and loss of the soul! And that is in accord with the Word of God: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man."

Will you come to-night? It is not a question of whether you come through fear. There were some, you know, who preached, "Flee from the wrath to come." It is not a question of whether you come partly through fear, and partly through a desire to know God: the one question is, Will you come? Will you come? He calls you: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and

learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" He is calling you—come—come—to-night! "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." He calls you; He yearns after you; He longs for you; He wants to save you from the power of sin, and finally from the presence of sin, and "present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." It can be done to-night if you will simply cease to neglect this "great salvation," if you will simply open your heart to the incoming of His Spirit, to the incoming of the light of God; if you will turn to-night you shall find salvation through the precious blood, by His grace. This may be the last time—I do not say it will, it may be—and no preacher of the gospel has any authority to say that there ever will be another opportunity of salvation. Moody said that the week before the Chicago fire he said to an audience, "Go home and think this over, and come again next Sunday and yield yourselves to Christ." And that week the Chicago fire intervened, and that congregation never gathered again. "Now," he said. "I never say, 'Wait.' I say, 'Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." I have preached to people more than once for the last time, and I learned afterwards when they had been brought to an unexpected and a sudden end that that which they heard from my lips was the last message of salvation they heard; and as far as I know they went out into the dark without hope, without God.

The opportunity is yours to-night, if you are unsaved. If there is one here without God, I beseech you, "as though God did beseech you by us . . . be ye reconciled to God." You remember that story of the man gathering eggs from the face of a precipitous cliff. He found it necessary to lower himself by a rope from the overhanging edge of a beetling cliff until at last he found himself opposite the ledge on which the sea-birds laid their eggs. But on account of the degree to which the cliff overhung the sea, the egg-gatherer found himself some ten feet distant from the ledge of the nests. He swayed himself as a pendulum, and at last the extreme inward swing of the rope brought him to the ledge, onto which he sprang. As he did so he lost hold of the rope. And there he stood for a few awful moments midway between the sea and the sky. The rope, swinging outward after he had quitted his hold, was returning like a pendulum. It came, but not so far as to enable him to clutch it from where he stood. Outward it swung again, and he realized with agony that as each time it swayed to and fro it would be further and further off, until at last it would hang stationary far out of his reach. When the rope began slowly to swing inwards, he saw that the next time it would be out of his reach. Breathless, he waited until the rope was just about to pause before swinging back, then, knowing that it was now or never, he leaped into space, caught the rope, and was saved! Another second and he would have lost his chance! There come times in the experience of the soul in its relationship to God, or in its relationship to the importunity of the Spirit of God to repent and believe—there come times when it is just like that, when it is now or never,-now or never. Believe now, accept now, or the Spirit may take His everlasting flight.

I wonder if there is anybody here like that this evening? Will you not come to God to-night? Will you not repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to-night? Will you not fee from the wrath to come to-night and find salvation through the precious blood? Let me repeat the text to you. Take it as the Word of God, inspired by the Spirit of God. May the Holy Ghost bring it home to heart and conscience: "For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"

I want to leave the Holy Ghost's question with you: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" May God in His mercy help every unconverted soul to turn in with His offers and find salvation by His grace, through the precious blood.

#### CHURCH NEWS.

Annual Business Meeting.—Our gathering last Friday evening was as rich in spiritual uplift as those held primarily for prayer and praise. The reports of the Prudential and Finance Committee, Treasurer, Parliament Street Branch, and all auxiliary societies were the cause for great praise to God. As we reviewed the year's work it was most evident that the Hand of the Lord had been upon us for good, which Hand also guided us in the selection of Deacons and Deaconesses. Following is the list of those elected, and we believe them to be men and women whom the great Head of the church has chosen:

Deacons—Messrs. E. A. Brownlee, George Greenway, J. G. Hyde, Charles Brownlow, George Booth, Fred Turney, and L. F. Shields. Deaconesses—Mrs. John Lillie, Mrs. C. J. Holman, Mrs. T. T. Shields, Mrs. George Greenway, Mrs. W. W. Brown, Mrs. George Booth, Mrs. W. F. Hayden, and Mrs. E. A. Brownlee.

Junior Dorcas Society.—The closing meeting of the Junior Dorcas will be held Monday evening, May 7th. A large attendance of the young ladies is requested, as there are still many unfinished garments.

Bible Lectures.—The complete series of the Pastor's lectures on "How to Study the Bible" may now be obtained at the church office.

#### JARVIS STREET CHURCH DIRECTORY.

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C. Leonard Penny, Director of Music, 1139 St. Clair Avenue W. Tel. Ken. 557.
W. J. Hutchinson, Sunday School Superintendent, 295 George St. Tel. M. 3321.

### The Church Calendar

Sunday. For the week beginning Sunday, May 6th, 1923.

10.00-Prayer Service in the Church Parlor, Mr. George Greenway.

11.00-Public Worship. Rev. C. H. Schutt will preach,

3.00-The Bible School will meet.

6.00-Prayer Meeting in Church Parlor.

7.00-Public Worship. Rev. C. H. Schutt will preach,

8.30—Monthly Communion Service

Monday, 7.00-Junior Dorcas Society.

Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, 8 o'clock-Meeting for Prayer.

Wednesday, Junior Service, 7.15.

The Parliament St. Branch, 250 Parliament St. Sunday: Bible School, 3.00; Evangelistic Service, conducted by Mr. W. L. McKay.

Wednesday, 8.00, Prayer Meeting. Friday, 7.15, Junior Service.