

The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF EVANGELICAL PRINCIPLES
AND IN DEFENSE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.
\$2.00 Per Year, Postpaid, to any address. 5c Per Single Copy.

Editor: T. T. SHIELDS

Associate Editor: ALEXANDER THOMSON

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

Address Correspondence: THE GOSPEL WITNESS, 130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2, Canada.

Registered Cable Address: Jarwitsem, Canada.

Vol. 13, No. 32

TORONTO, DECEMBER 20, 1934

Whole Number 657

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

THE SHEPHERDS AND THE ANGELS' SONG

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

Preached in Jarvis St. Baptist Church, Toronto, Christmas Morning, December 25th, 1933.

(Stenographically Reported)

"And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."—Luke 2:15.

Prayer before the Sermon

We lift our hearts to Thee, O Lord our God, as to the God of all grace, Who has been made known to us through Him Who is the express image of Thy person. We thank Thee for the coming of Jesus Christ into the world. We bless Thee that when we could not, for ourselves, discover God, it pleased Thee to reveal Thyself to us in Him. And this morning we bow in Thy presence, approaching Thy throne, desiring Thy help, confident of Thy grace, because we have seen Thee in the person of Christ.

We thank Thee that Thou hast come near to us, that Thou hast condescended to our low estate. Thou hast come into the world, Thou Incarnate Saviour, as a little Child; Thou hast experienced all the buffetings of our human life; Thou hast trodden the path before us—there is not a valley which Thou hast not explored; there is no hilltop to which Thou hast not ascended; there is no temptation to which we are subject, to which Thou hast not submitted Thyself; Thou wast in all points tempted like as we are, and yet without sin.

We thank Thee this morning that we have not to read only the story of Eden with its beginnings of splendour, and its succeeding shadows, deepening into dark tragedy, but that Thou hast opened another chapter in human history at the place called Bethlehem; and there we have seen another Adam, the Lord from heaven, Who came a quickening Spirit, that we might be born again, that a new life might be imparted, that the plan and purpose of God might be fulfilled, and His ideal realized when He said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

We thank Thee that we come this morning having a clear view of Thy face in the face of Jesus Christ: God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

This morning, O Lord, we worship Thee, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. But we come not to the Jesus of Bethlehem only; we come through Him Who died for us, whose precious blood was shed that our sins might be washed away, that the Mercy Seat might be set up, that a new and living way into the divine presence might be opened, which way has been opened through the rent veil of the Saviour's flesh, the way which He has consecrated, which He has perfected

forever more. There is no other way. We hear Thee say, Lord Jesus: I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. We come, as the wise men, to see Thee; we pray that Thou wilt give us such a vision of Christ, such a clear apprehension of the grace of God in Him, and such participation in that grace, that, like the wise men, having seen Him, we may depart into our country another way.

Oh, that Thou wouldest help us this morning, that we may come, not in any formal way, but with broken and contrite hearts, with reverent spirits, confessing our need, our utter spiritual destitution, our need of the super-abounding grace of our God!

We thank Thee for this morning brightness. We bless Thee for the sunshine which the coming of Jesus has brought into the world, for the burdens He has lifted, for the pains He has alleviated, for the sorrows He has dispelled, for all the tears He has wiped away. Oh Lord, we know not how to praise Thee for what Thou art! We had never dreamed that Thou wert such a God; we had never, in our fondest imaginings, dared to hope that Thou wouldest come to us with such compassion, with such healing grace, such uplifting and enabling powers, as Thou hast shown us in the Person of Him Who was born in Bethlehem.

We thank Thee that many in Thy presence have some realization of this truth, some experience of the grace of our God. And now this morning accept, we pray Thee, the worship of our hearts, the adoration of our renewed spirits; and help us that we may go from this place better men and better women for having come.

We think of a needy world this morning, we think of countless multitudes of people who need much in this life, but who need nothing so much as a real visitation from God. Is not that what we all need? Wilt Thou not revive us again, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee? Graciously come, we pray Thee, in Thy saving power, to multitudes of people. Dispel the darkness of the day, and bring back again the immortal hope, the hope of life, and light, and liberty, in Christ Jesus the Lord.

Help us in our meditation this morning. We bless Thee for this holy treasury of wisdom, and as we turn to its sacred pages, we pray that the Holy Spirit may enlighten us, and prepare our hearts also for the reception of the truth, that this hour may be one of exceeding joy.

Help us to see His star! May it come and stand over the place where the young Child is. Help us that, like the wise men, when we see the star we may rejoice with exceeding great joy.

Hear us in this our morning prayer, and accept us through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

One of the proofs of the inspiration of this holy Book consists in the fact that it never wears out, that it is always new and fresh. Of all the stories to be found in all the literature of the world, there is none that is comparable to the story of the nativity. We have heard it since we were children, and long before our advent other generations listened to the same story. And yet I suppose it is as fresh, and as full of interest to us all this morning as it ever was. I thought I detected it as you sang these very familiar hymns this morning: your comprehension and apprehension of the truth thus expressed itself in song. We have been made to share alike in the joy of the wise men and of the shepherds, of which my text speaks:

It would be difficult, I know, to find any new angle of approach, or to discover any new thing to say about this Christmas story. But after all there are some things that are but the sweeter the oftener they are repeated:

"Tell me the story often,
For I forget so soon;
The early dew of morning
Has passed away at noon."

We need to be reminded of the things we know, and to few afresh truths which perhaps have fallen somewhat into disuse.

I shall call your attention to some things this morning involved in this text which perhaps are obvious, but are none the less valuable on that account.

I.

The shepherds were engaged in one of the humblest of all human occupations. They were not numbered among the high and mighty of the earth: they were keeping watch over their flocks by night. They were night workers who were under the necessity of labouring while many others slept. And to them, while in the exercise of their ordinary vocation, in the discharge of the commonplace duties of life, there came a revelation from heaven. It is not only to the great and high that God discloses Himself. Indeed, "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." It is strangely, but strikingly, true that God has ever found His most faithful witnesses among the humble of the earth: "I thank Thee, O Father", the Lord Jesus said, "because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

It is commonly assumed that in order to be spiritually wise, in order to be instructed in the things of God, one must be naturally of unusual mental capacity, having one's powers trained to the highest degree. How we have been—I had almost said—wearied and surfeited by the citation of words uttered by men who were supposedly learned. Someone placed a magazine on my desk. I glanced at it this morning for but a moment—I had not time to read it, but just read enough to discern the gist of the argument, which would involve a denial of the principle of this text, the assumption that men by their own efforts, and by their own superior learning, may find some way of improving upon the

Christian message. The truth is that those to whom God communicated Himself in the beginning were just as humble as we. Their lives were just as hum-drum, just as commonplace; and they had, apparently, no larger natural capacity for the reception of the truth. And yet, these common men are immortalized in the story of the nativity, because they were divinely selected to receive this first communication from heaven.

That is the message I bring to you: that there is no way of knowing Christ except by a direct revelation of God—whether it be the wise men or the shepherds, the only way of finding the Christ is by listening to the heavenly voice. The shepherds would never have dreamed of it had it not been that there came to them an angel from heaven.

To most of us here that is the merest commonplace. But it is of great importance; it is indispensable to an understanding of the truth that there is, a world beyond the ken of natural men, that there is a realm of knowledge into which man cannot of himself penetrate, a treasury of truth for which he has no key whatever. A summary of all that is wise and good is somewhere to be found, but it will never be discovered, or discovered, will never be truly discerned and identified apart from the star, His star, which God puts into the sky. I mean that we must be divinely taught if we would know God: "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God", said Jesus. "Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me"; "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out". Not by the reading of books, not by much study, which is a weariness to the flesh, not by the exercise of the greatest of our natural powers, can we find God: "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" God is not to be discovered by elaborate experiments; He is not to be discerned by microscope or telescope. Just dimly may men apprehend that there is a Creator, that there is an infinite Spirit. But Who He is, and what He is, how He may be approached, how He may be known, remains forever a secret until the angel comes from heaven, until a voice is heard out of the sky, until God Himself withdraws the veil and makes Himself known. The shepherds spoke of that "which the Lord hath made known unto us". Are you in His secret? Have you received, not a gift from Santa Claus, but a letter personally addressed to you from heaven? Has the angel reached you? Have you heard his message? Only thus can we come to know Christ.

II.

There came upon those men whose lives were so dull and drab and uninteresting, so wanting in all that one might suppose would lead men to consideration of the highest interests of life—there came to them the sound of music from afar. The radio is not new; there has always been music in the air. There have always been heavenly choruses. At the birth of creation, from the beginning, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. This world is full of discord and dissonance, of contrary voices, of babel sounds. I thought yesterday as I was driving, when the roads were very slippery, and when wise men moved cautiously, and carefully, and slowly, how human dispositions are often disclosed in the ordinary affairs of life. I saw men ready to jostle others, to push their

way in. I reflected, After all, that is what life is: a race,—everyone trying to beat someone else, to gain an advantage over him, to pass him by, to get ahead of him, no matter whether he must go into the ditch to make way or not.

There is not much music in life until the angels come. But they know how to sing. They know how to bring the message of reconciliation, of atonement, and—if I may use the term—attunement, bringing all things into harmony with the will of God. Thus were we taught to pray, that His will might be done on earth even as it is done in heaven. There never was a song like that which was heard in the fields of Bethlehem. There never was a choir heard on earth to sing such glorious hymns of praise as the shepherds heard. And they paid no fee: they listened to the heavenly music without charge:

"It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold."

How much we need that heavenly music still! Who shall bring order out of the present chaos? Who is to reintroduce any semblance of harmony as between individuals, and communities, and nations, in the wide, wide, world? Only the music from the skies, only the music divinely communicated can eliminate the discord, and tune human life afresh to the heavenly pitch.

III.

There are some spiritual raptures in life such as those shepherds experienced, which are of short duration. The angels went from them into heaven. I suppose we have all heard the angels sing, in our spirits. We know something of that holy emotionalism which joins earth and heaven, and makes us feel that life is worth living. I have no objection to sanctified emotionalism. I rejoiced as I heard the children sing last evening their happy gladsome songs which are so appropriate always on the lips of those who are forgiven. We ought at times, at least, to be like the shepherds, carried away by some heavenly rapture, forgetful for the moment of the dreary drudgeries of earth, as I suppose they were almost forgetful of the sheep that were in their care, so enraptured were they with the heavenly song. But the religion of the Lord Jesus is something more than an occasional spiritual rapture. We cannot live always in church; we may not be privileged always to listen to heavenly choirs. The angels go away from us into heaven, do they not? And how sad, sometimes, the reaction seems to be when that light that never was on sea or land departs, and we are left in the fields, when we must go back again to the old job, to the office to-morrow, to the common tasks, and to the difficulty of relating ourselves to others, when once again we turn to the ugly grind of things, after the angels are gone! What shall we do in the succeeding silence?

IV.

"And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass."

God has said something to us. God, in His mercy,

has made known something which we could not discover: Let us go and put the revelation to the proof. There is always that element in the Christian religion. I have so often said to you, God never super-imposes His will upon ours; He comes in to take possession, to enable us, voluntarily, to serve Him. He gives us the revelation, not in Bethlehem but in the field; He leaves us some journey to make, something to do, somewhere to go. He conditions the larger blessing upon the co-operation of the will, upon the yielding of ourselves to Him and to His cause. Not to those who dwell in Bethlehem but to wise men afar did the star appear; and they only saw the Christ Child who followed the star.

My dear friends, when God comes to us with these divine communications, it still remains for us to go to Bethlehem and see for ourselves. The Apostle Paul in telling of the heavenly vision explained that when he was going to persecute the saints, going to Damascus with letters from the high priest, suddenly there shone round about him a light, and he heard a voice from heaven. And he said, That is the explanation of the change in my life: the light and the voice from above—a vision from heaven. And to King Agrippa he said, "Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

It is one thing to have the vision; it is another thing to be obedient to it. When the angels were gone away into heaven, and they were left in the fields with the flocks about them, grey streaks of dawn uprising, and the morning just upon them, these shepherds said, "Now, what? Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass."

My friends, the reason so many people do not believe the Bible is not because they have not heard the angels' music, but because they have not gone to Bethlehem after hearing the angels' song: not because they did not hear a voice from heaven, but because they did not obey. This revelation of divine truth could never have been properly appraised by any merely academic examination or discussion of it. You cannot discover the star of Bethlehem with a telescope. Other stars you may, but not that star. You cannot get to the heart of the gospel by a mere analysis of its grammar and syntax. You will miss it all that way. Therefore, having heard the angels, go to Bethlehem and see this thing; put your gospel to the proof; test the principles of God's word in the crucible of experience. Believe it with all your heart, and then act as though it were true, and you will find it true.

The applications of that principle are innumerable. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Somebody says, "But I don't see that. I do not understand how that can be true." And you never will understand it unless and until you obey it. That text says, for example, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." That is the revelation. "But I do not see how all these things are going to be added." I say you never will see until you do actually seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and whoever does really before God seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, will discover that *that* the word of God, like all His words, is true. But the only way to prove that it is true is to go to Bethlehem and see the thing that has come to pass.

V.

What thing? What is the great truth? "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." That is what the vision says. That is what the voice declares. "But He is not my Saviour." Is He not? Then go to Bethlehem and see the thing that has come to pass. Come to Him; yield to Him; trust Him; commit your all to Him, and you will discover that that is exactly what He is.

How different from the conventional ideas of the Christian religion is this gospel revelation! Too often are the story of the birth of Christ, His later life, His subsequent death and resurrection, regarded as events to be objectively viewed and admired, and discussed one with the other. Not thus can we verify the truth of the angels' message. What is the Christian religion? It means for the shepherd who has grown somewhat tired of his work, who feels that there is not much of joy and satisfaction in life, who has grown a bit weary of the treadmill of existence, keeping watch by night, suddenly to see a light from heaven, and to hear a voice from heaven, and to feel a rapture of soul, and then to come down to solid earth again, and then to go and see whether this thing that was told from heaven is true—and to discover that it is true, and in his heart to cry, Hallelujah! I have a Saviour. He helps me. He has washed my sins away. He will help me to keep my flock to-night!

That was true of the shepherds, and of the wise men. They came long distances. They saw the Christ; they worshipped Him; they presented to Him their treasures, and then they departed into their own country another way.

You can never be quite the same as you were after you have actually seen Jesus Christ. When you have verified the gospel by putting its promises, its precepts, its principles to the proof, when you have gone to Bethlehem and have seen that what the voice from heaven said was true, was actually a fact, when you have found the Babe, and have learned the reality of God by trusting the promises of God—you will always go home another way.

May God help us to see Him, and seeing Him, to worship Him, and worshipping Him, hereafter to walk with Him another way.

"SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT——"!

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,
Sunday Evening, December 16th, 1934

(Stenographically Reported)

"Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John 3:16.

The Bible, from beginning to end, is a travellers' guide; it is designed to tell us how safely to make our way from earth to heaven. It is full of the doctrine of salvation; from Genesis to Revelation it has but one theme, Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

I fear that too frequently we are disposed to confine ourselves to the advantages of knowing Christ to the saving of our souls—that, of course, is the all-important matter—but it is necessary also that we should give thought to the consideration of the fate of those who

know not Christ, for only thus may we fully know how great that salvation is. Here are the two sides of the question: to be without Christ is to perish—whatever that may mean; to believe in Him is to have everlasting life. Particularly we shall give our thought to these two aspects of truth this evening.

I.

First, to the enquiry: WHAT DOES THE BIBLE MEAN WHEN IT SAYS THAT IF WE BELIEVE NOT ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WE SHALL PERISH? What is it to perish? What special judgment does it imply? What particular punitive act of divine justice is here referred to?

Let me remind you that *in the divine economy there is nothing arbitrary*. Though God Himself is absolutely sovereign, yet He is never an arbitrary despot; sovereignly disposing things according to His own good pleasure, yet if I may reverently say so, He limits Himself by the laws of His own being. He is the Holy One, and the Author of universal law and order. What God does is always grounded upon some natural necessity. The divine decrees are not the arbitrary decisions of a capricious ruler: they are the radiations of His own perfection. And when we are told that such as are out of relation with Him, and who believe not, must perish, we are to remember that even that has a sound philosophical foundation; there is always a reason for it.

What is it to perish? It means, first of all, *the continuous development of natural tendencies*. It means that what we are within, all our capacities and our natural tendencies, must inevitably, in the course of time and throughout the endless cycles of eternity, continually develop and enlarge. You do not need to be a theologian to reach the conclusion that the scriptural doctrine of retribution is true. We need only to study ourselves, and we shall be forced to reach the conclusion that if it were possible for all the fires of hell, whatever they may be, to be extinguished, there is enough of hell in every one of us by nature to rekindle them to-morrow. There is no man, who will be honest with himself, who will not acknowledge, even as did the Apostle Paul, "The good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. . . . I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me." That law of sin and of death, which is in our members, that something which is inseparable from our natures, inexorably operates, and needs neither judge nor jury to secure its inevitable end. If there be no external powers laid upon any of us to hold us back from the precipice, there is no man here who does not know that naturally he is moving downgrade just as surely as physically he progresses from the cradle to the grave. It will not be long until here and there there will be gray hairs upon us; indeed, the marks of decay, the forerunners of death itself, are apparent in every one of mature years. As surely as that is true physically, there is a law of sin and death within, operating through our natures, which predicts, which renders inevitable the truth of this text, that unless there be some superhuman power, something apart from ourselves, to lay hold of us and check us, and bring us back, we shall perish. All that any man needs to do is to neglect "so great salvation", and there can be no escape for him.

I say, there are inherent capacities and tendencies which, by the operation of natural law, must at last bring every one of us to ruin in time or eternity—or both—unless God shall intervene.

Man is different from all God's other creatures. I could multiply analogies which have in them a parallel truth. For example, the surgeon comes and examines the patient. He whispers in the ear of someone one word, "Cancer". That is all. But he does not need to say anything more than that. If that be true, it means physical ruin. Leave the patient alone: you need do nothing—he will perish.

Look at a ship yonder, if you like. The rudder is gone. There is now no means of controlling it, or directing its course. However able the seamen, however competent the man upon the bridge, that ship must drift with wind and wave. Let it alone. There will be no need of dynamite to blow it up. It is uncontrolled; therefore it drifts to its own destruction.

When the human will is enfeebled or shackled, and the rudder is gone, the man drifts. There can be only one end: he will perish unless something arrests his course toward destruction.

What a terrible tragedy that was in Lansing last week! I did not read the particulars. I could not help them, and it was useless to harrow one's feelings by reading the details. I was in the United States, and I saw some photographs of human forms among the ruins. I saw a photograph of what had been a bed, and what was said to be the form of a woman, slightly bent as though she had tried to raise herself in bed, but had been overcome with gas and flames. She did nothing! She did nothing! She was in a building doomed to destruction. She perished, not because of anything she did; but, because she was entrapped in that doomed building.

But in forecasting the future of unbelievers we must recognize there is a difference. When God created man, He put a sceptre in his hand, and a crown upon his brow, and said, "Have dominion." He gave him intelligence, conscience, will, that he might be, under the King of kings, himself a king. There is a vast difference between animal instinct and human intelligence. The Lord contrasts them: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, and the people doth not consider." Endowed with a superior intelligence, and with volitional power to direct his own course, man has less sense than an ox or an ass, according to the divine verdict. Sin has dulled the intelligence, blunted the moral sense, and rendered man morally stupid.

A man is arrested because of his part in a fatal motor accident. There is no doubt about his being responsible for the death of someone on the highway. What is his plea? That he was drunk; that he could not control the vehicle under his hand. He had no evil intentions, but he was incompetent to direct the car. Is that a just defense? No! The court would say, "That only adds to your condemnation. You had no right to be at the wheel of a motor-car when you were drunk. If you knew you were going to drive a motor-car, you had no right to take liquor, and render yourself a menace to yourself and to everybody else. That is no defense."

It may be we have to say that our wills are gone, our consciences defiled, our intelligence befogged; that we are the victims of a power greater than ourselves. But that will not do. We are what we are because sin entered into the world. And even though it be that to-day we have no power to recover ourselves, and are drifting toward the precipice with certainty of perishing, the fault is ours. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." I know there is a law that operates automatically. Wheat produces wheat, oats produce oats,

thistles produce thistles. But if a man deliberately, willingly, sows something that will produce a harvest of evil, the responsibility is his. That is the divine judgment. We reap from fields of our own sowing. We are entangled by our own thoughts, imprisoned by our own acts, paralyzed by the evil to which we have extended an all too generous hospitality.

With what result? We are now helpless. We shall perish unless we receive aid. But the responsibility is ours. Let me repeat it: the responsibility is ours.

Therefore this other element obtains. God will not judge the non-intelligent part of His creation as He will judge us: "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Hence the teaching of the Word of God is that in due time God, in the exercise of His holiness, every attribute of Deity consenting, will bring us all to judgment.

I talked with a man last week in a certain American city, who is a noted criminal lawyer in that part of the country. He said he had a murder case on Thursday, and was for the defense. He had never prosecuted but once in his life. Tuesday night he said he would be busy getting ready for the case, and could not see me. I dropped into court Thursday afternoon and heard him examine witnesses. He said to me afterward, "It is a great responsibility when a man's life depends on one's presentation of the case. I stand for the prisoner, and I must do my best in his defense." I saw them in the court. The prisoner sat beside his attorney. The lawyer frequently conferred with him. The prisoner said never a word in his own behalf. As the witnesses took the box the lawyer questioned them. Occasionally the prisoner would put his hand to his lips, and whisper something into the ear of his advocate, but never once did he speak aloud in court. That lawyer defended the man who was on trial for his life, and he seemed to be kind, and gracious, and solicitous, for the case looked dark enough. That prisoner was to him almost as a son. He could not have done better had he been his own son. And with what confidence that able man asked his questions, without a tremor in his voice! When he had done he said to the prosecutor, "Take the witness." I saw the prisoner relax occasionally, sit back in his chair; and I thought there was a suggestion of satisfaction in his attitude.

Talking to the lawyer during a recess in the proceedings I said, "I hope you will win the case." "Thank you, I hope I shall." As I looked at the prisoner I said, if he were alone, if he had nobody to speak for him, nobody to plead his case, how hopeless it would be. Standing there at the bar, silent, shackled, all but condemned already! That would be to perish.

What a terrible thing it will be for a man to stand at the great white throne, the judgment bar of God, with all the record of his life an open book, and the Judge Himself the chief witness—and nobody to say a word! To perish! To be shut out from heaven! I do not know what labor is. I have known a great many people enter into elaborate discussions about it, but I have always taken the position that it is so infinitely terrible that even if one put the mildest possible construction on what the Bible says of the future of those who die impenitent, it is enough to freeze the blood in our veins; it is enough to fill us with terror, even to contemplate it. It is ever my prayer that we may never know any more about it than we do now. We had better be on the safe side than perish.

I had a friend, a minister, who was given the difficult task of ministering to a man who had been found guilty of murder, and sentenced to die. It was the most terrible trial that he ever had in his life. A petition was circulated to pray for executive clemency, and this minister was deputed to go to Ottawa to present the petition. He told me afterward, "The Minister of Justice was one of my deacons. I visited at his home very frequently, and he visited at mine. We were intimate friends, and frequently went for long walks together. But when I went to see him in his official capacity, and was ushered into his office with the petition, he did not greet me cordially—he did not recognize me as a friend. He was there to hear what I had to say. Without any expression of recognition upon his countenance he heard my story, and then said, 'You have produced no new evidence, and the department will not take the responsibility of recommending executive clemency. The law must take its course. Good morning.'" My friend said, "He was not my deacon. He was not my friend. He was simply the embodiment of inexorable justice." We were walking in the woods together when this dear man of God told me the story, and when he had finished he put his arm through mine, and with tears in his eyes he turned and said, "Brother, how terrible a thing it is to be under the law! Oh, how terrible to be under the law!"

And so it is. It means to perish. But how much more terrible to be under divine condemnation! Yet that is the doom of every sinner; unless a power that is more than human shall intervene, nothing can prevent our perishing.

But, thank God, there is another side to the story. God has done something. Do you know why He has done it? In order that all those who are under the law "should not perish, but have everlasting life".

II.

That forces upon us the question, WHAT IS IT TO HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE? One thing that is involved is that, *by the exercise of a superhuman power, our natures are changed.* These evil tendencies that would drag us down are now subject to a corrective influence. I am not interested in a mere psychological salvation. I have no hope that every man, by the pursuit of some ideal, however lofty it may be, will ever arrive at that place of which we were singing a few moments ago,—

"Jerusalem, my happy home".

Not thus shall we arrive. Who of us does not know that the miracle spoken of in the third chapter of John, which our Lord Himself said was indispensable to salvation, is indispensable in our particular case? "Ye must be born again." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." To have "everlasting life" means to be the subject of a miracle, to have something new put within us, to be made new creatures in Christ.

The medical profession deals much to-day in antitoxins of one sort and another. I do not understand it save to know that, by the injection of some new principle, some new element, into the system, it is expected that the patient will receive a power that will oppose and overcome the principle that would destroy. This new force is injected to fight against the poison that is leading the man down to the grave. When that element is introduced into the man's system, the fight begins, and if the antitoxin is effective it overcomes the disease.

How medical science has searched—and is now searching—for something that can be put into the human frame to fight cancer. God grant it may soon be successful!

What is it to have everlasting life? It is to receive from heaven something that is essentially heavenly; it is to receive something from God that is essentially godly. It is, indeed, to receive the very life of God Himself into these poor fallen natures of ours, so that all the potentialities of the divine nature are put within us to fight the battle against sin.

When that is done, our capacities for evil shrivel, diminish, until at last they will be entirely destroyed, and the soul will be set free to fly away as a bird from its cage, to be with God. Everlasting life means more than to be let out of prison, and given a new start. That would do us no good. It is to have Christ formed in us, "the hope of glory". Then we "shall never perish, but have everlasting life". That is salvation. It is a new life from God.

Someone says, "Do you mean to say, sir, that when I am saved, I receive something I did not have before? Does it not rather mean that my natural powers are given new direction?" It is far more than that. It is to receive from God something that was not there before. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." That eternal principle that is imparted is everlasting: it is a life that has no end, upon which death has no power. You remember what our Lord Jesus said? "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." That life which He laid down for us, and which He took again, He imparts to us. Death and hell have no power whatever over that life. The body may die, but not the spirit. We have "everlasting life". It will last forever. That is the subjective aspect of it.

What about the objective element? Is salvation all within? Yes, in one sense it is, wrought by the power of the Spirit of God. We are given new capacities, new tendencies, a desire to go up instead of down,—new tastes, new appetites.

But what is the use of having a good appetite if you have no dinner? And what is the use of having a good dinner if you have no appetite? Of what value would fine music be to the deaf; or, for one to have acute hearing, and be doomed to dwell in silence, or where only discord is found?

What I want to make plain is that salvation not only brings a man into agreement with God, but it brings him into agreement with the environment into which he is introduced. For example, they sing a new song up yonder. It is all about the blood, the song of the redeemed. There are some people who do not know anything about music. There are some who enjoy music as much as my dog does! When we turn on the radio, he runs. It is the only defect in his intelligence! We used to have a dear brother here who was the best singer we had in the church. It did not make any difference whether he had ever heard the hymn before or not: he had one tune for everything! He did not know the difference between, "God Save the King", and the Doxology. He was a true-hearted man, but defective in his musical capacities.

I was in the United States last spring, and went into a restaurant with a friend and his wife after a meeting, for a little supper. To my amazement they ordered onions. When I expressed astonishment my friend said, "I am a little peculiar." My olfactory system does not work: I cannot smell anything." "You cannot smell an onion? Happy man!" But what would be the use of, turning a man like that loose—do not be offended, you Canadians—in a beautiful English garden of a June morning? Does it not make you English people homesick even to mention the fragrance of an English garden?

I printed a sermon some years ago in which I described a beautiful garden in England, where the turf was like green velvet, and where there was an abundance of flowers about; where the birds were singing sweetly. We sat under the trees and ate strawberries with Devonshire cream. I received a letter shortly after from a man in the United States who had read my description, who playfully told me I ought to be arrested for cruelty. He had an appetite for what I described, but lacked opportunity to indulge it.

What is salvation? It is the germinal implantation within us of capacities for the enjoyment of all the felicities of heaven. And more than that, it provides for us "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time". What would you do with a million dollars, or with five million? You would no doubt make a simpleton of yourself! You would not know how to use the money. But when we walk the streets of gold, as princes of the blood, members of the royal household, we shall every one of us be to the manner born, citizens of the New Jerusalem by a new birth, with an affinity for all heavenly things.

And best of all, we shall be in the immediate presence of the Lamb Who is in the midst of the throne. There are people whose company you do not greatly enjoy. Even in my little experience as a Pastor, people have come into my study with fear and trembling, as though they were coming into a lion's den! They are, however, usually soon put at their ease and we become good friends. What a joy it is to have a true friend, somebody who understands you, and whom you understand! I used to say of our dear Brother Carew who went to glory while I was in England, that it did not matter what he talked about, so long as we could be together. We could spend hours together for the sheer joy of being in each other's company.

What a joy it will be to see the face of Christ the Beloved! And that will be salvation. Paul put it all in one sentence: "To depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." Therefore, natural men must have their hearts changed if they are to enjoy His presence.

III.

FOR WHOM IS SALVATION DESIGNED? For "whosoever believeth in him". What does it mean to believe? I shall not go into the philosophy of it. We might. It is ever an interesting study, to resolve faith into its elements, and to learn that faith itself is founded in the nature of things. But we have not time this evening for that.

Again I refer to the Lansing fire. I saw a photograph of a discarded fire-net. The firemen had used it so much that the net gave way. They had held it out again and again, saving a great many—but at last it broke. I do

not suppose, while it was in use, anyone stopped to ask of what it was made, to ask the principle of its construction. Not for a minute! While the flames were devouring that hotel, they leaped, trusting. It would be time enough to go into the explanation of things after they were safe. Their one concern was to get out of the burning building, to a place where there was no possibility of perishing. There is only one way we can be saved.

"None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good."

Are you young? It is for you. Are you old? It is for you. Be you rich or poor, wise or unlearned, no matter what you are, who you are, "whosoever believeth in him (shall) not perish, but have everlasting life". That is the teaching of our text.

A man related to me an experience he had, which I had often pictured in my mind, but, although I have crossed the Atlantic many times, have never really seen. He told me of being in mid-Atlantic when the cry was raised, "Man overboard". Instantly the whistle blew, and a boat was lowered. A man who was mentally deranged had leaped from the stern of the ship into the sea. But before the great ship could be stopped and turned around, or the boat that was lowered could get to where he had plunged in, he had gone down. He had perished! Often I have leaned upon the rail in mid-Atlantic, sometimes when a storm was raging, and sometimes when the sea was as calm as a mill-pond, and asked myself, What would it be to find one's self in that vast expanse of water? It would make no difference whether one could swim or not. The marathon swimmer, the champion swimmer of the world, would have no more chance of surviving than the man who could not swim a stroke. It would make no difference whether the sea was calm, as I have seen it, or raging furiously. He might go down a little sooner if it were rough; but if it were smooth as glass, and a man were dropped twelve hundred miles from shore, to be told, "Your only chance is by your own efforts to make the shore", what chance would he have? None at all. He would perish. Yet he would have a thousand-fold better chance than any man can ever have of getting to heaven by his own efforts. There is only one way: "Whosoever believeth in him (shall) not perish, but have everlasting life."

DR. J. FRANK NORRIS

No preacher in the world is more welcome in Jarvis Street Church than Dr. J. Frank Norris, of Fort Worth, Texas. Jarvis Street was privileged to have a visit from Dr. Norris Monday, December 17th. It was but a flying visit: Dr. Norris arrived from Detroit late afternoon, and left the same night at eleven-thirty. No elaborate announcements were made, and no attempt to organize a great meeting: the simple announcement that Dr. Norris would be the preacher assembled a great congregation.

Dr. Norris' text was Micah 3:8—"But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin." It was a great sermon, setting forth the great need of churches and ministers being full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, in order that they might be equipped to rebuke men's sin, and bring them to repentance and life.

Hundreds gathered about the preacher afterward to shake his hand, among them many who had been converted through his ministry when in Toronto in 1924, and others who had received great spiritual inspiration from his preaching.

We hope to have Dr. Norris with us for a more extended period in the near future. We have greatly rejoiced in the blessing which has attended his ministry in Detroit during the past few weeks, of which we shall write more at a later date.

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 10

No. 2

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 2 First Quarter January 13th, 1935

THE ADDRESS OF GOD AND JOB'S REPLY

Lesson Text: Job, chapters 38 to 42.

Golden Text: "And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before."—Job 42:10.

Bible School Reading—Job 42:1-17.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—Psalm 89:8-18; Tuesday—I. Kings 19:9-18; Wednesday—Numbers 12:1-9; Thursday—Jer. 32:16-24; Friday—Jonah 3:1-10; Saturday—Acts 26:15-23.

I. THE ADDRESS OF GOD (chapters 38-41).

Elihu having contributed his part to the discussion, the Lord suddenly appears in the whirlwind and addresses Job respecting the question at issue. The latter had expressed the desire to be answered by God (31:35); he had also requested vindication, and both were divinely acceded to, although probably not in the way in which he expected. Job receives vindication, but he is first taught the lesson that submission to God is the proper attitude to adopt, and not questioning the divine actions. The greatness of God is brought to his attention, together with the insignificance of man; and the necessity is manifest of trusting in the divine wisdom and power.

In pursuance of His purpose of enlightening His servant concerning the proper attitude toward Himself, God, by a series of questions respecting His creative work, sets before him His omnipotence and omniscience. The first reference relates to the foundations of the earth (38:1-7): "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding." The answer to such a question makes manifest man's insignificance. God is the Creator: man the creature. The divine knowledge is infinite; human knowledge is finite. This is further emphasized by the reference to the proportions and foundations of the earth (vs. 5, 6). Man has been permitted to gain some knowledge of the earth, but the extent of such knowledge only brings home to the consciousness of man the vast realm of the unknown; and convinces him of the meagreness of that which he knows. Note the wonders of creation (Gen., chapters 1 and 2), together with the joy manifested at that time; and the necessity for humility and subjection in approaching God, and forming judgment respecting His actions.

Following the reference to the foundations of the earth, the sea is mentioned, with emphasis upon the divine limitation of its waters (vs. 8-11); then the dayspring, with its light encircling the earth, and bringing into view the various parts of it to the discomfiture of the wicked who do their evil deeds in the darkness (vs. 12-15). After this, reference is made to the springs of the sea; the gates of death; the breadth of the earth; light and darkness; the treasures of the snow and the hail; the east wind, the rain, the dew, the frost, and the ice; the wonders of the heavens; and the provision of food for animal life (vs. 17-41). God's knowledge and power are great, far transcending those of man. He made the world, separating sea and dry land, regulating light and darkness, and making possible the use of the marvellous powers of the heavens in the interests of men. Note the reference to the stars (vs. 31, 32), the connection of lightning with rain, and the instinct of the lower creative orders in securing their food. We live in an orderly universe; governed by a beneficent, all-wise Creator. We should recognize this, and trust God more implicitly. In doing this we shall receive more blessing.

Continuing His questioning, God makes clear man's lack of knowledge and power, by reference to animal and bird life. First, in relation to the wild goats (39:1-4). They are not shepherded by man, yet they propagate their species, and bring up their young. This is due to the care of God. The wild ass is in the same category, together with the unicorn, and the peacock and ostrich. Then horse is also

referred to, with its great strength and its eagerness for the battle; also the hawk, with its instinct for migration to a warmer climate before winter; and the eagle, with its high abode, keen sight, and manner of seeking its prey. Animal and bird life forms most interesting study, and gives evidence of the wisdom of God. He cares for the least of His creatures, as well as for the greatest. To them He has given instinct which guides them in their activities; and He has made provision for their sustenance. Nothing has been overlooked in the plan of God, and nothing escapes His knowledge in the world which He has created (Matt. 10:29, 30).

After a pause, God again addresses Job, and calls upon him to answer His message (40:1, 2). This produces a most humble reply, wherein Job acknowledges his sinfulness and his inability to answer the divine plea. A man may justify himself before men, but he cannot do this before God. In the day of judgment the wicked will be speechless before the Almighty (Matt. 22:12), and in these days of grace he can only plead guilty, and trust to the divine mercy (Rom. 3:19-22). Following Job's acknowledgment of subjection, God again answers him out of the whirlwind, and challenges him respecting the government of the world (40:6 to 41:34), referring particularly to the judgment of the wicked, and the controlling of behemoth, an animal having a likeness to the elephant and the hippopotamus, yet in some respects unlike either; and leviathan, the mighty saurian monster, akin, some think, to the crocodile. Reference is made to the power of this amphibian, the insignificance of man in relation thereto, and the greatness of God in making and controlling such a creature. If God can manifest His power in this manner, and rule over all the lower creation, then what is man that he should seek to stand before Him? Note the contrast between the power of God and that of man.

II. THE ANSWER OF JOB (42:1-6).

The answer of Job is of a most humble kind. God had manifested His power and wisdom unto him, and he acknowledges his mistaken attitude, and repents in dust and ashes. He admits God can do everything, and that no purpose of His can be hindered. This is a testimony to the omnipotence and sovereignty of God. Man is feeble in contrast with such power, and cannot stand against it (Ps. 2:1-5). This admission is followed by a confession of lack of understanding of divine things. Job, like many since his day, had uttered words concerning a subject too wonderful for him, which he understood not. Knowledge of God is by revelation, and is not gained by merely human investigation. There is therefore the necessity for studying the record of that revelation, known as the Bible. Note the blessed effects of such a study, in knowledge and life (Ps. 119:97-104). The closing words of Job's confession intimate a new realization of God. Hitherto his ears had heard of Him, but now his eyes saw Him, with the result of abhorrence of self, and repentance for sin (vs. 4-6). Evidence of God's presence and power was no longer of a hearsay character; he had first-hand experience of them. And such is needed these days. Note the necessity for personal contact with God in the new birth (John 3:5), through repentance and faith in Christ (II. Pet. 3:9; Acts 5:30, 31).

III. THE EPILOGUE (42:7-17).

In this closing part of the book there is recorded the divine reproof of Eliphaz, and his two companions, the announcement of the turning of Job's captivity, an account of the restoration of his prosperity, and a statement respecting the fears of his life. In the reproof, God states His anger at the wrong attitude of the three friends. They had not presented the divine side of the question in a proper manner. They had sought merely to convince Job that his suffering was due to his sin. He, on the other hand, had not been quite right in his attitude, but had repented. Direction is therefore given to offer sacrifice, and to pray. Note the significance of these respecting forgiveness of sins through Christ as our Mediator (I. Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:25). Observe, further, the time of the turning of Job's captivity (v. 10); the returning of Job's friends, each one in accordance with eastern custom, bringing a present (v. 11); the increased number of his flocks, the number of his family, the same as before, testifying to the fact that the former members were not lost, but had merely gone before; and the significance of the names of the daughters in relation to Job's sad experience.