

## THE PASTOR'S MESSAGE

## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Rev. P. J. Trafton\*

I would like to have you read again, if you will, the first chapter of St. Matthews's gospel, verses 18 to 25; also chapter 2, verses 1 to 12. Then, if you will, turn to the gospel of St. Luke, chapter 2, verses 1 to 21. I have chosen as a text verses 10 and 11 in the second chapter of St. Luke's gospel. "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." The text and the portions of scripture I have asked you to read reveal to us the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. It is impossible to divorce the New Testament from the Old Testament. We cannot rightly interpret the Old without the New. Our text is the fulfillment of the prophecy by Isaiah in chapter 9, verse 6: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." We must study the context of the portion that we have chosen in order to fully appreciate its meaning. First, it was a heaven-sent message. It tells us that on a certain night there were shepherds abiding in the Judean field, keeping watch over their flock. "And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid." I have tried to picture in my mind, and I imagine you have too, the wonder of that scene. A glorious light, white, almost dazzling, and in the midst of it a heavenly visitor, the angel of the Lord, with a message from the heavenly world, to a few humble shepherds, not to the high and the mighty and the noble, but humble Judean shepherds. Second, it was a message of good tidings of great joy. No more uplifting message has ever been heard. Folk the world over at this Christmas season are living in fear of a message that might come, bearing the sad news of some dear one who has fallen in battle or has been lost at sea or it may be has been taken prisoner or reported missing; how sad the world is because of this. But here we have a message of good tidings of great joy. God interesting himself in sinful humanity, a fallen race. Interesting himself to the extent that He is sending His only Son into the world to redeem mankind from the power of sin, and give them freedom and liberty. What a joyous message! All heaven it seemed was filled with rejoicing to over-flowing, for, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men." My soul is fired anew as I contemplate the wonder of it all, and I bow in reverence to worship at the feet of Jesus and shed tears of joy at the prospect of one day seeing Him face to face, to tell the story, saved by grace." Third, this message was to be a universal one, "which shall be to all people." The Jewish people had the feeling that they were special favorites with God. Here we have the announcement that, the good tidings of great joy was to be to all people. Praise the Lord! So to the rich, the poor, the high, the low, the educated, the illiterate, the king or his meanest subject,

the bond or free, this message came and comes today. The hymn writer expresses it beautifully in these words:

"Joy to the world, the Lord is come.

Let earth receive her king;

Let every heart prepare Him room,

And heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! The Saviour reigns;

Let men their songs employ;

While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains

Repeat the sounding joy."

Fourth, this message stated definitely where Christ the Lord was to be born, where they would find Him, and how they would know Him. Here they were to behold the Son of God, born of a woman, born after the flesh. Miracle of all miracles, "a virgin shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus." This heavenly message stirred the shepherds to action. "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. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger." Their eyes saw what the messenger had stated, to be true, and they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. It is exactly the same today. If folk will seek for Christ in the way prescribed and in the place definitely stated, He will be found of them.

"Tis true, O yes, it is true,

God's wonderful promise is true;

For I've trusted and tested and tried it,

And I know God's promise is true."

Fifth, the heavenly message stated that this Christ-child was to be a Saviour. "And thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins." Here is a definite statement of what He will do. This promise is to save us from the thing that has plunged this world into war and taken peace from the earth, sin. This thing that ruins lives and takes men down the black, black road to eternal darkness and endless night. There is no promise that we will be saved from temptation, sickness, sorrow, pain or physical death, these things will come to us all, but we have the promise of inward deliverance from the power of sin, and victory in the soul in spite of our outward circumstances. Let us unite our voices in praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Then let us do all we can through the medium of our lives to bring that peace to a troubled world.

\* Fredericton, N. B.

## THAT NAME HIGH OVER ALL

Rev. R. H. Hamilton

As the Christmas season approaches, our thoughts centre around the Christ-child. It had been prophesied to our first parents that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head." Enoch, the seventh from

Adam, had foreseen His second appearing when He would come with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon the ungodly. Job, in a very early day, when his faith was being buffeted by a three-fold Satanic attack, looked down across two thousand years and cried, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." As the centuries advanced, the bards sang even more definitely,—"But thou Bethlehem-Ephratah—out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah 5:2. Then to the faithful watchers the signs were fulfilled and the angelic escort swung low over Bethlehem's plains and announced the birth of the Prince of Peace. "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Yes, it was good tidings which should be to all people. And to Joseph the announcement was, "And thou shalt call His Name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

How badly the world needed a Saviour! All had sinned and come short of the glory of God. The curse rested upon all mankind, but God's love was manifested in sending His Son to make an atonement for the sins of the whole world. The Prince of Glory humbled himself and became obedient unto death, yea the shameful death on a cross, that we might be saved from the wrath to come and become heirs to eternal glory:

"His name yields the richest perfume,

And sweeter than music His voice;

His presence disperses my gloom

And makes all within me rejoice."

The name Saviour does not imply that He came to relieve our economic ills, or to deliver us from sickness or pain. It is true, that in answer to prayer He has often sent material aid and has healed many aching bodies, but that is not His fundamental mission. He came to save us from our sins. And notice, dear reader, that He did not come to save us in our sins, but from our sins.

"He breaks the power of cancelled sin,  
He sets the prisoner free."

General Bertrand said to Napoleon on St. Helena, "Emperor, I am surprised that you believe in Jesus Christ."

"Bertrand," said Napoleon, "great generals like Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne and myself have founded mighty empires on force. Today who fights our battles? The world spurns us. Jesus Christ founded His empire on love and today there are millions who would die for him."

Long after the Hitlers, the Hirohitos, the Stalins, and the Mussolinis have passed away, and the last gun has been fired, from east and west and north and south and from the ocean depths millions will come forth to meet Him when He shall descend from the vaulted skies, "in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: when He shall come to be glorified in His saints." Methinks we can hear myriads of earth's redeemed ones peal forth old Coronation:

"All hail the power of Jesus' Name,

Let angels prostrate fall;

Bring forth the Royal Diadem,

And crown Him Lord of all."

—Canadian Free Methodist

121

es that  
opiness  
itution  
God's  
It is  
to do

live in  
her  
real  
e who  
a they  
ship  
come?

ould at  
their  
to have  
erested  
e same  
in one's

In the  
institu-  
high He  
stitution  
st force-  
ns since  
whose  
best, the  
ges have  
n which,  
ires and  
is stood  
he high-  
all rises

e reason  
eper re-  
ng God?  
work of  
u, be ye  
ness for  
develop-  
onfess a  
His help  
he mer  
deser-  
for to  
year  
and  
to me  
of Jesus  
hearts of

points of  
practices  
ie Living  
failing to  
greement  
quot.  
in "One  
ught, the  
en. One  
od which  
of trust,