

The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED WEEKLY

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

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PASTOR AND EDITOR

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

SATURDAY, JULY 29th, 1922.

11

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

BEAUTIFUL ZION.

A Sermon by the late Rev. T. T. Shields, father of the Pastor.
Reprinted from The Canadian Baptist of November 28, 1895.

(See note at the end of the Sermon).

"Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces."—Psalm xlviii. 12, 13.

To utter these words to a pious Jew, would be like mocking his misery. Compared with the day when this Psalm was written for the sons of Korah, "Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation"; while her expatriated people are to be found in every nation under heaven; as one has said, "Having residence everywhere, and government nowhere." So fearfully has God answered this prayer at the Saviour's crucifixion, "His blood be on us and on our children."

Are we, then, to conclude that this part of God's word has served its purpose, and, like a worn-out garment, is no longer of any use? What, then, are we to understand by the words of Isaiah: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand for ever"? We dare not be among the number who think any part of God's word has gone out of date. In our judgment, it must stand or fall together.

Many years after this Psalm was composed, Paul wrote to the Christian Jews, or Hebrews, "But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written, 'or enrolled,' in heaven." In another place, he speaks of Christians as "fellow-citizens with the saints." From this we learn that ancient Zion was only a picture, or shadow, of good things to come. So, as "coming events cast their shadows before," ancient Zion was a shadow of the coming, and more enduring, Zion; the spiritual city, inhabited by "the church of the first-born, who are enrolled in heaven."

The true Zion, then, consists of those who are written, not merely in the roll-book of some earthly denomination, but those who are written in heaven. The true Zion—the Church of God—still stands, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

I. Looking at the text from this standpoint, let us **GO ROUND ABOUT ZION AND MAKE SOME OBSERVATIONS.**

We shall discover, if we observe closely, that Zion is beautifully situated. "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion."

The Church of Christ occupies a conspicuous position. It is highly exalted. "Ye are as a city set on a hill," said Christ. There is fine, pure air on the hill-tops; breezes of grace and love; high up above the mists and fogs of doubt which hang over the valleys of unbelief. It is good for spiritual health. Years ago, when the people of Zion took to camping in the valleys, at one time they said: "We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble." The Lord looked down upon them and said: "Why, then, is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" And the Lord's servant cried: "O Zion, that bringeth good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain." A grand place for health is the mountain top. Peter thought so, when, on the mountain top with the Master, he exclaimed: "Lord, it is good for us to be here!" But lofty positions entail great responsibilities. A city on a hill is easily seen; it cannot be hid. If you are a Christian, you are a public character. Even though you never take part in a prayer meeting, nor take an active part in church work; from the moment you profess Christianity, the eyes of the world are upon you; and many judge of Christianity, not by what they read of it in the Bible, but by what they see of it in the lives of its professors.

The Church of Christ, the City of God, stands on the borders of the State of Grace, only divided by the stream of Death from the State of Glory. It is nearer heaven than any other place in the world. How long does it take to send a message and get an answer? "It shall come to pass, while they are yet speaking I will hear." No telephone can be quicker than that. We measure distance now by time, not by miles. We say, "It is so many hours' journey, or so many days' journey, to such a place." By that method of reckoning, how far is heaven from the church on earth? "Absent from the body, present with the Lord."

We further observe that Zion is "the joy of the whole earth." That is not how many regard it. There are those who consider Christianity as a drag on the wheels of progress. They speak of Christians as having old-world notions, and straight-laced ideas. Have you ever thought what kind of a world this would be, if there were no Church of Christ in it, no gospel preaching, no prayer, no public worship? The world is bad enough to-day. But if Christ had not left His church in it, there would have been no light in the surrounding darkness; no salt in the putrid mass. Bad as this world is, powerful as are the devils by which it is haunted, if there were no Church of Christ it would be a very Pandemonium, the abode of fiends incarnate. Hear the words of the Lord: "And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard; as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers; as a besieged city. Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah."

We are apt to overlook some of the beneficial influences the Church of Christ is exercising. Unless we have so many converts, we are prone to think nothing has been done. Let us look at this. You know men, in whose honesty, integrity, and uprightness of character you have perfect confidence. And yet they never professed religion; never were members of any church. But you would as willingly do business with them, as with any professor of religion you ever knew. Now, where did they get their lofty principles? "Oh!" says one,

"they were well brought up; well trained by their parents." That only shifts it further back. Where did their parents get them from? There is an educating and restraining influence being constantly exercised by the Church of Christ, which we shall do well not to overlook. In our just laws; in the general high character of men of commerce; in our various hospitals, orphan asylums, and other benevolent institutions; in the vast numbers who are truly converted to the Lord Jesus Christ, we have overwhelming evidence that, to-day, "the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion."

Again we observe, **Zion is the city of the Great King**: "God is in the midst of her." "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst." "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," or age. Though God is everywhere present, He is especially so where His people meet. Nor does it affect the truth of this statement to say that many never realize His presence. If our faculties are dormant, benumbed, or impaired in any way, by so much we lose consciousness of what they would otherwise reveal. A blind, deaf, and dumb man, could neither see, hear, nor converse with his friends, though in the same room with them. Even so if our love, hope, and faith are dormant, or dead, we shall not realize the Lord's presence; but that will not affect the truth. In the midst, the middle, the centre; as near to one point of the circumference as another, "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him."

II. Having made these observations, let us now **TELL THE TOWERS THEREOF**.

In ancient Zion there was one tower called "The Tower of David, builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields for mighty men."

In the spiritual Zion there is an **Armoury Tower**, but it is not limited to shields and bucklers. It contains the whole armour of God. Neither is it limited to a thousand men, but the whole army of Immanuel which, when John saw them, comprised a number that no man could number. In the tower of Divine Truth are stored up the ten heavy guns of Mount Sinai, which are not spiked yet, though many try to persuade themselves that they are. Then there is the new gun, which the Prince of Peace placed there with these words: "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another." That is a deadly weapon, when used among a lot of quarrelsome disciples. Here is an example of the shells it fires: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

And here is a round shot from the same gun: "And this commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also." Then there is the helmet of salvation, with its plumes of holy joy; the sword of the Spirit, and its unbreakable girde of truth; the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, and the shining shoes of peace, of which the prophet said, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace." The banner of Calvary is stored in the armoury tower. It has never witnessed a defeat, for the warriors of the Cross, armed with the whole armour of God, are "more than conquerors."

Then there is the **Observatory Tower, or the Tower of Faith**. Wondrous sights can be seen, sometimes, from the summit of this tower. When the sky is clear, and there are no clouds of doubt or unbelief floating about, it is said glimpses may be obtained of that part of the city across the stream of death. Paul was up there once, and he was so enraptured that he said he could not

tell whether he was in the body, or out of the body. The sights he saw he described as "things unutterable." Here, too, observations are taken of the Sun of Righteousness. The City of Zion is expected to keep her time by the Sun. This is a very important matter, as so many look to her, that she should keep correct time. If she lags behind the Sun, or goes before the Sun, many may be misled. I had a friend who had a private observatory at the top of his house. It contained a very powerful telescope. Going up with him on one occasion to view an eclipse of the moon, I made two discoveries. I found that when the glass was elevated to the proper angle, I had to get down on my knees to look through the telescope. That was one discovery. Another was, that I had to shut one eye and look through with a single eye. Even so, those who could look through the glass of truth must get low down. They must also look with a single eye; not look with one eye on the world, and the other through the glass. An eye, single to the glory of God, is necessary if we would see the things of God. "If thine eye be single," says Jesus, "thy whole body shall be full of light."

Again, there is the **Tower of Refuge**. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe." The Lord has revealed Himself by various names, to suit the varied needs of His people. In the midst of His conflicts, the Lord revealed Himself to Moses as "Jehovah-Nissi," the Lord is my banner. Merchants, travelling through eastern deserts in companies, had lights on poles for travelling by night; and each company had its own arrangement of one, two, or more lights, and so each could tell his own company, or caravan. They called them banners. And so, as Moses looked at the pillars of fire, he thought, "The Lord is my banner." What a comfort and refuge has the assurance of Divine guidance been to the Lord's perplexed children, in their journeys through the wilderness of this life. How many have found refuge in that other name, "Jehovah Jireh, the Lord will provide." Does not memory recall many such hours in your experience? And then there is another name, in which every Christian finds refuge: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." When the law-storm of conviction raged, and you could find no shelter, you fled to Jesus, and now you understand

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear."

III. Let us now heed the further admonition and **MARK WELL HER BULWARKS.**

"We have a strong city. Salvation hath God appointed for walls and bulwarks." "Salvation" involves the exercise of all the attributes of God.

"Here the whole Deity is known,
Nor dares the creature guess,
Which of the glories brighter shone:
The justice or the grace."

These bulwarks are remarkable for their height. "Thy mercy is great unto the heavens." Has anyone ever measured the height? Astronomers tell us the distance of sun, moon, and stars; but who has ever computed the height of the blue vault of heaven? So high are the bulwarks of mercy—immeasurable.

"My trespass was grown up to heaven,
But far above the skies;
Through Christ abundantly forgiven,
I see thy mercies rise."

So high are these bulwarks of mercy, that the longest winged fiend of the bottomless pit cannot fly over the top of them! "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him."

Their Strength, too, is worthy of note. "And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen wall, and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee, for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the Lord." The Lord's strength is engaged to defend His people. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people." The walls of preserving grace are built upon God's omnipotence and immutability, and all the artillery of hell cannot batter them down. Time, which crumbles other walls, has no effect on these, for the Lord will never leave nor forsake those that trust in Him."

Their extent is full of encouragement. When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child." I thought that the blue heavens were above. "But when I became a man I put away childish things", and I found that this world is a globe, and the heavens, I thought were above, are all around the globe. So is the mercy of God; so are His protecting bulwarks, all round His people. We hear persons sometimes crying out in alarm for the Church, and, like Uzzah, are ready to put forth human hands to save and steady the ark of God. There is no need for it; God will take care of His own people. What is true of His Church, as a whole, is true of every individual member of it: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against them." They shall never perish."

The favorable testimony of an enemy is reckoned more weighty than that of a friend. You expect a friend to speak favorably; if an enemy does, you know truth compels him, for he would not if he could help it. Let us have the testimony of an enemy: "And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job; that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?" Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?"

If you wanted to express complete protection, could you find better language than this, which came from an avowed enemy of man?

IV. CONSIDER HER PALACES.

There is the **Palace of Peace**. It is built on the Rock of Ages, and it faces the plains of light. There is only one door into it, the door of Justification. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." In it there are many quiet resting places, couches of Divine favor, on which weary souls may rest. The company is very select. Anxious cares are kept away from the Palace. Heavenly meditations, and divine delights, are the constant companions of those who dwell in the Palace of Peace. When David lived here, he said: "In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul." Those who enter the Palace have a beautiful musical instrument presented to them. In a friend's house, one day, there was a musical box on the table, which played a certain number of tunes; and then, when wound up, played them over again. The thought occurred this would become wearisome in time, as the tunes became familiar. But this music, in the Palace of Peace, never tires. It is called, "The Testimony of a Good Conscience." It is the sweetest music ever heard. With it, one can sing songs in the night, yea, in the darkest night of trial it enables the soul to "rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him."

Consider the **Palace of Joy**. This adjoins the Palace of Peace, through which you must go in order to get to it. Peace first, then the joy in the Holy Ghost. When you enter, you see a portrait of an unsaved sinner ;and it has this peculiarity about it, that everyone who sees it, sees in it a likeness to what he was once. Under it is the inscription: "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." The contemplation of the change which has been wrought fills those who have experienced it with joy unspeakable. Those who enter the palace have a beautiful casket of jewels presented to them. They are exceeding great and precious promises of unspeakable value, diamonds of truth. In connection with this palace there is a secret chamber, where the King of Kings gives audience to His subjects, and often they exclaim: "In thy presence there is fulness of joy."

There is another palace. The city is partly on this side of the stream of death, and partly on the other. The other palace is on the other side of the river. It is called the **Palace of Glory**. There is not so much known about this palace, as those who go there stay, and they do not come back to describe it. It is thought we could not understand it if they did. The language spoken there is the language of Canaan, and we do not understand it. We are accustomed to say, "If it were not for so and so, or but for so and so, we should be satisfied. There are no ifs nor buts in the language of Canaan; it is a pure language, without any need of such auxiliaries. In it the comparative degree is unknown, all is superlative. Its gardens are the most beautiful, its fruit the most delicious; its fountains the purest; its views are the clearest; its prospects, the most enchanting; and its climate the most congenial, partaking neither of excessive heat nor winter's cold. Its inhabitants are the wisest and holiest, decked with the richest jewels, clothed in the purest white, and enjoying perfect happiness. Its worship is the most sincere and constant; its music the most faultless and harmonious; its anthems the most lofty and sublime. Feebleness, decay, and old age are unknown within its limits. Eternal strength, duration, and freshness, are stamped on all that the heavenly part of Zion contains. And so in the Palace of Joy, contemplating the time when they shall cross to the Palace of Glory, and roam o'er its plains of light; the citizens joyfully say, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Child of God, rejoice in thy prospects; fix thine eyes on the recompense of thy reward.

Sinner, who art a stranger and foreigner, wilt thou become a fellow-citizen with the saints? "Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors. Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of man. My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine. Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in and shall not be able."

Note. The Pastor begs the indulgence of the readers of **The Witness** as he writes this personal word. He has spent most of the time for the past ten days at the bedside of his mother waiting for "the Tide which drew from out the boundless deep" to "turn again home." At this writing (Tuesday) she still lingers, but is when passengers go to sleep before the train actually leaves the station. In these waiting hours the Pastor has had no opportunity to prepare copy for **The Witness**, and his thought has naturally turned to his

father, who is waiting to welcome to the Morning Land the one he loved so well. And among the many spiritual treasures with which he enriched his children and others, he came upon the sermon printed above. As he read it and longed again for "the sound of a voice that is still," and thought of another hand so soon to "vanish," he rejoiced in contemplation of their reunion in "the Palace of Glory." This sermon, so long ago written by "a vanished hand," and preached by "a voice that is still," is published here that his walking about Zion, and his consideration of her palaces may, as the text admonishes, be told "to the generation following." The sermon says: "There is not much known about this Palace (of Glory) as those who go there stay, and do not come back to describe it. It is thought we could not understand it if they did." No, alas! They do not come back. But as the light of the Palace of Glory even now shines upon the loved face so soon to vanish from our view, we rejoice more than ever in the knowledge of the way that leads to the Palace, "The Lord will give grace and glory."

THE LATE MR. R. S. HUDSON.

In the home-going of Mr. R. S. Hudson, July 18th, Jarvis Street Church has suffered an inestimable loss. Mr. Hudson was one of the oldest of our members, who had served the church in many capacities, being at the time of his death a Trustee, and a member of the Prudential and Finance Committee. His faith was simple as a child's, and that is a high spiritual attainment. In the midst of a world littered with broken promises to rest with a child's unwavering faith in the promises of God is an achievement which only divine grace can accomplish. And his faith made him a man of unshakable conviction. He believed God's word, and he would tolerate no suggestion of the untrustworthiness of the Bible. He loved the Lord with all his heart, and his faith was fruitful in many good works. A man of affairs, and of large influence in the City, he was everywhere known as a Christian gentleman. He carried into all the relationships of life a savor of Christ. He loved Jarvis Street Church, and in our recent experience he continued steadfast and immovably loyal to the principles to which Jarvis Street was dedicated.

Such a character as Mr. R. S. Hudson is an asset of incalculable value to any church. He made the religion of Christ real, and the truth of the gospel inestimably precious. The great company of men, representative of all the interests of the City, who assembled at his funeral, evidenced the large and influential place he occupied in the City's life. To Mrs. Hudson, to whom, through years of invalidism he showed a most tender and beautiful devotion, and to all the members of the family, Jarvis Street Church extends sincerest sympathy.

CHURCH NEWS.

Last Sunday. In the Pastor's unexpected absence last Sunday, the Rev. H. Dixon Smith on furlough from India, very kindly ministered to us morning and evening. His messages were accompanied by many evidences of the Holy Spirit's power. As a man of God, Mr. Smith's visit made a large place for him in the hearts of Jarvis Street people. One of the direct results of his ministry appeared in the extraordinary prayer meeting on Monday evening.

We are learning in some small measure to follow the guidance of the Spirit of God in these services. No special subjects for prayer are mechanically announced; but week by week God's people are led out in earnest intercession for such objects as they feel led of the Spirit to pray for. Last Monday evening's meeting was practically given up to earnest intercession for God's blessing upon our great missionary enterprise in India, and this was as it should be. We hope that as opportunity offers from time to time, Jarvis Street will not be found wanting in generous financial support of all our denominational missions. But what if the visit of all our various missionary representatives should have the effect throughout all our churches of calling the people to prayer; what revivals we might then hear of in India, and Bolivia, and Grande Ligne, and in all our home mission fields! We are grateful to Mr. Smith for his messages, which have already been fruitful in summoning us to a more earnest ministry of intercession in behalf of India. This the people felt was the Spirit's call. Jarvis Street hopes to have the great privilege of hearing Mr. Smith again before he returns to India in the fall.

Postponed Business Meeting. On account of the Pastor's absence, the business meeting of Wednesday evening, July 26th, was postponed for one week.

JARVIS STREET CHURCH DIRECTORY.

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The Church Calendar

For the week beginning Sunday, July 30, 1922.

SUNDAY

10.00—Prayer Service in the Church Parlor, Mr. George Greenway.
 10.30—Communion Service.
 11.00—Public Worship. Rev. Harrison Roe will preach.
 3.00—The Bible School will meet.
 Lesson for the day: The first return from exile. Jeremiah 29:10-14; Ezra 1:1-11.
 2.30—Open-Air Work with the Gospel Car, starting from Jarvis Street Church.
 3.00—The Parliament Street Bible School, at 250 Parliament Street.
 5.30—Open-Air Service on Gerrard Street.
 6.00—Prayer Meeting in Church Parlor.
 7.00—Public Worship. Rev. Gypsy J. Hawkins will preach.
 7.00—Service at Parliament Street Branch.
MONDAY, WEDNESDAY and SATURDAY—8.00—Prayer Service.
THURSDAY—8.00—Open Air Service, Gerrard St. gate of Allen Gardens.