

# 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.

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## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

HOW TO BE SAVED.

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis St. Church, Sunday Evening, August 13th,  
and stenographically reported.

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."—John 1: 12, 13.

**T**HE Bible everywhere assumes that there is something wrong with the world. The Bible everywhere takes it for granted that men are by nature out of right relationship to God. The whole purpose of this book is to reveal God's way for man to return to his Maker; to be delivered from the curse of sin, and restored to fellowship with God, and conformed to the likeness of His Son.

I want this evening, as I frequently do on Sunday evening, to discuss the very alphabet of the gospel. I should like to leave every member of this congregation without excuse "in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel"; and therefore, I must be as plain, as simple, as direct as I possibly can be, and bring you a simple word of direction as to how to be saved. I trust it may not be without profit to those who are already the Lord's children; for it is a good thing, you know, when going on a journey to make absolutely sure that the train you have boarded is going in the right direction.

It would, perhaps, be difficult to find a simpler word than that which I have read to you this evening. It is said of our Lord Jesus that "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."

**I. Salvation Involves the Reception of Jesus Christ.** Whatever it may mean to receive Jesus, they are the sons of God who have received Him.

What then is involved in receiving Christ? Perhaps it may help us to consider what was involved in His rejection. "He came unto His own"—His kinsmen according to the flesh; His Jewish brethren; the privileged people to whom the divine oracles had been committed—but they did not recognize Him as the Saviour they needed, "and they received Him not." But there were others,

who took up an attitude exactly opposite, who received Him. It may help us perhaps to set these two things in contrast; and as we see clearly what was involved in His rejection, we may come to understand something of what His reception implied.

I think the teaching of scripture is that Jesus was rejected by His own people, first of all **because of His teaching, and because of the implications of His teaching...** He claimed to be a summary of all that God had ever spoken: He claimed to be God's last word to the world; the Divine ultimatum; the last message of the King of Kings to His rebellious subjects; that He was, Himself, the embodiment, the exemplification of the truth He taught; and that His message was the fulfilment of all that the prophets had spoken. He came before men as God's Pattern Man. He came to teach men what they must be in God's sight, if they would be happily and savingly related to Him. He was, Himself, a restoration of the lost standard of Righteousness; and that was the implication of His teaching always. "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" There was that about His blameless life and about the testimony of His teaching which brought condemnation to every man who came into His presence. He expounded the spiritual character of God's law; He made it clear that the law of God required something more than an external conformity to His will. He showed clearly that God dealt with the spirits of men; that he took cognizance of the contents of the heart; that He is holy; and that they that dwell with Him must be holy as He is holy. And to those who imagined that they had attained to the righteous requirements of the law, He said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." In other words, Jesus set a standard of life to which the world was a stranger. He brought down from Heaven God's rule of judgment, and He measured men by the Divine Ideal. As you read the story of His teaching you will find that again and again His auditors are filled with anger, because He has penetrated the outward seeming of their lives, and has revealed their inner character, showing how far short they are from what God would have men be. It was because they rejected this divine standard they rejected Him.

It is not enough to ask men merely to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, for we must understand something of what is involved in believing. And I venture the assertion that we cannot really receive Jesus while we reject His teaching; while we reject the testimony of His whole life—and the testimony of His life is this: That we are all sinners—every one; that even though we have attained to "the righteousness of scribes and Pharisees," our righteousness must exceed that to the measure of the righteousness of Jesus Himself. And few of us like to hear it; few of us are willing to acknowledge it. But true faith is never possible without repentance. It is never possible for a man really to receive Jesus without understanding that the coming of Jesus into his life means a complete transformation; a revolution; the removal of one master, and the setting up of Another; the uncrowning of one king, and the crowning of Another.

And so I must ask first of all this evening, How many of you have taken this first step in the direction of receiving Jesus? Are you willing to bow to His teaching? Are you willing to accept His revelation of the Divine will respecting our character and conduct? Are we willing to allow our lives to be brought into the white light of His judgment, to be tried by the principles of His teaching? and to acknowledge that we are—every one of us—brought under the condemnation of His law?

There are some here perhaps, who say, "Yes, sir, that is my case exactly, and I do not dispute it." Very well, then, we have made progress.

If you read the record, you will find that His own received Him not—because they were unwilling to submit to His authority—to His personal

authority. It was at this they marvelled: "He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." They came to Him, and said, "By what authority doest Thou these things, and who gave thee this authority?" And when He said, "Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven," they said, "Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God only?" Who is this who claims authority over us, who comes to us to be our master, not only our teacher, who claims to have the right and authority to loose us from our sins, and to cancel our indebtedness, and to put us right with God?" And they only received Him, who bowed to His authority. And we cannot receive Jesus until we recognize that "all authority is given to Him in heaven and on earth." While you measure Him with other men, you are lacking the clear vision of His true character. "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" One said one thing, and another, another. "But whom say ye that I am?" "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

Do you know who He is? "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made." Can you submit to that? Are you ready to receive Jesus as the Creator? as the Lord? to submit to His sovereign authority? If so, we have made still further progress. Can you say this: "Yes, He is my Teacher; and He is my Judge; He has convinced me of sin; He is my Lord; He has revealed God to me."

"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not"; and they rejected Him upon the ground of the claims of His Saviourhood. "Even to them that believe on His name." "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." "Jesus" means Saviour; and no one can believe on a Saviour, who does not acknowledge his need of salvation. They rejected Him, and brought Him to the cross. And when they saw Him there, they said, "If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him." They would accept Him without the cross. And there are a great many people who would receive Jesus without the cross. The popular religion is a bloodless religion. There are people here this evening who would be ready to receive Jesus as their Ideal. They love to talk about Him as a carpenter; as the man of Nazareth; as a philosopher; as a great teacher. But no man can possibly receive Jesus until He is ready to receive Him in His character as a Saviour from sin; as a substitute for sinners, dying in our room and stead. So far, can you receive Him?

II. **The Reception of Jesus Conferred The Privileges of Sonship.** "To as many as received Him, to them He gave the privilege to become the sons of God." And it is a great privilege to be a son. First of all, it carries with it the liberty of access to His presence. It is a great thing to know that the door is open into the Divine Presence to be assured that neither Peter nor any successor of his, holds the key. Blessed be God! There is no priest but ONE to whom we need come. The servants must knock at the door ere they enter; they must come with deference; they must come only when they are called. But the little child of the family claims the right to come when he wants to come; and he simply pushes open the door and walks in.

I heard a certain preacher tell a story out of his own experience, a little while ago, of how he had had a crowded week, and Saturday afternoon found him with no preparation made for Sunday; and so he gave orders that he must not be disturbed; that whoever called, they were to be told that the minister was too busy to see them. And, as he said, "I told my household that nothing short of a fire should be permitted to break in upon my privacy." But

in the midst of his meditation, he heard some little feet coming up the stairs. Presently, the study door opened, and he saw there his little boy of about four years of age. He said, "Well, what do you want?" "Oh, nussing. I came up to tell you how I love you." "And so," said the preacher, "the sermon and everything else had to be put aside while this little fellow was permitted to come to his father's arms." He was a son, and he claimed the right to push his way into his father's presence at any time.

Ah! It is a priceless privilege to be a son; to know that the law must stand aside when I want to get to God; for Jesus has magnified the law and made it honourable in my behalf. I am no longer under the law, but under grace; and I have the privilege of direct access to the presence of God.

So, if you have received Jesus, as I have been telling you to-night; and if you still have many difficulties; many disappointments; many occasions of stumbling; you have a place where all these things can be rectified, for the Door into the presence of God is wide open! "To as many as received him, to them gave he the privilege of becoming sons."

Then, this carries with it, beyond question, the assurance of the Divine favour. It is well to know that God has smiled upon us. The prodigal was not sure what his father would say; how he would be received; and prepared, you will remember, his speech for the occasion: "Make me as one of thy hired servants." But when the father received him as a son; when he put upon him the best robe, and the ring on his hand, and the shoes on his feet, he knew then that he had been wholly restored to his father's favour—and had nothing more to fear.

My brother, God is no longer your Judge, if you have received Jesus. I never expect to meet God as a Judge. The sins of the believer have been judged at the cross; they have been forever put away. We have become "sons"; and now we rejoice in the favour of God. He will never withdraw His smile from His own.

"My God is reconciled;  
His pardoning voice I hear;  
He owns me for His child;  
I can no longer fear;  
With confidence I now draw nigh,  
And 'Father, Abba Father,' cry."

It involves, of course, as well, the benefits of heirship. For "if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

I wonder if I can make plain my thought. I trust we have come to see that our reception is not conditioned upon our good works; that salvation is of grace, and grace alone. Our sins are blotted out for His Name's sake; and yet there are many of us who are still, in principle—though not in words—praying the prayer of that prodigal when he said, "Make me as one of thy hired servants." "I have come back, but I should like to be permitted to pay my board; or at least to earn something—and I do not ask for anything more than that which I earn." But you know the father's answer. It was in effect: "Son, in this house grace reigns. You are an heir; all that I have is yours; and you may claim it when you will."

Let us remember then that all the way through the Christian life the same principle of grace assures us of an answer to our prayer. Jesus paid it all,—and that means ALL. He has placed in Heaven's bank, a deposit of merit, that will cover your utmost need to all eternity. You are an heir.

I remember hearing my father tell a story years ago, when I was a little boy, of a man who acquired a large estate, in the midst of which there was a great mansion, full of treasures of inestimable worth. And having paid the price, he took his little boy with him, and went to inspect his estate. He had told his son where he was going, and what was the object of the journey.

When they drove through the lodge gate, and looked upon the hundreds of acres of beautiful park land, the little boy looked up in his father's face, and said, "Father, is this ours?" "Yes," his father said, "all ours." Presently, they went to the stable, where there were many valuable horses, and as they walked up and down admiring the splendid animals, the little fellow said, "Daddy, are they all ours?" "Yes," his father replied. "All of them, every one of them?" "Yes, they are all ours, every one of them," said his father. "Then may be I can have that one to ride on," said the lad. He was picking out his own. Later they came to the great mansion itself; and as they moved through the magnificent halls, and the father admired that which the product of his own genius had purchased, the little fellow had but one question, always, to ask—"And is this ours too?" To which his father had but one answer: "Yes, it is, all ours."

And that is a parable of the Christian life. Becoming sons, the Father takes us by the hand; He leads us by the illumination of His Spirit, and through an understanding of His word into our inheritance in Christ, until we are led to exclaim, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." And as wonder after wonder of redeeming grace is revealed to the admiring gaze of the redeemed soul, he simply says, "Father, is this all ours? Every thing ours?" And the answer is, "All things are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." "As many as received Him, to them gave He the privilege of becoming the sons of God."

III. Salvation involves the reception of Jesus; the reception of Jesus confers the privilege of sonship; and **The Privilege of Sonship Necessitates The New Birth.** "As many as received him, to them gave he the right to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born"—"born again"; made new creatures, fitted for the inheritance prepared for them in Christ. "Marvel not, that I said unto Thee," said Jesus, to Nicodemus, "ye must be born again."

Salvation then does not consist merely in subscribing to a statement of truth; there is that element in it; but there is also the subjective work of the Spirit, making us new creatures in Christ Jesus. How is that new birth accomplished? "Which were born"—"But," says somebody, "I was pretty well born myself, sir. You do not know my father, do you? You do not know my family history? I come of a good, and godly family. All my ancestors were Christian people. I have a great heritage of godly influence behind me. There is good blood in my veins; and do you mean to tell me that I must be born again." The preacher knows nothing at all about it apart from the Word, and the Scripture saith, "Which were born, **not of blood.**" You may have the blood of kings in your veins, but that does not admit you to the presence of the King of kings. For kings and commoners, and all between, in His sight are sinners—every one—and "you must be born again."

"Which were born, **not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh.**" Ah, yes, you made up your mind to be a Christian, did you? You made up your mind that you would somehow get into the kingdom. If it is a worthy resolution, if formed by the power of the Spirit of God, and implemented by Him, you are to be congratulated. But let me remind you that we are not born "of the will of the flesh"; and it is not by any resolution that we can make that we find our way into the Kingdom of Heaven. There is something more than the human will operating in the quickening of a soul dead in trespasses and sin; there must be more than "the will of the flesh." I spoke to you this

morning about Abraham. Ishmael was born of "the will of the flesh"; but Abraham had to learn that the children of the promise are counted for the seed. There is no salvation in the utmost power of the strongest human will.

"Nor of the will of man." Lest anything might be omitted in this excluding word, God declares that this new birth is not of human power at all, but declares it is "of God." "To as many as receive Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God," and somehow, and at some time, in the process of receiving Him, and becoming sons, the Spirit of God quickens the soul, and it is born into newness of life. And from beginning to end it is God's work, and therefore it is of God's sovereign grace alone.

IV. And now let me bring you this one word more before I close, of what must necessarily follow from this truth—receiving Christ; becoming sons; being born of God **Assures Us Of Certain Special Benefits.** First of all, it assures us that we have eternal life, because the life that is in us is the life of God. We have been quickened by the Spirit of God Himself. "We have been born, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." That seed is in us, and we shall live for ever. We are sure of everlasting life, because, and I say it with reverence and in grateful wonder, the life of God is in us!

And then, just this simple word for the babes. I was speaking to one of these brethren baptized this evening only last night on this principle,—and I want to say it to you. This assures us that **God will take care of us during the process of development**, while we are growing up into Christ. Salvation does not promise immediate perfection. Conversion is a birth; it is the beginning of a new life, which is gradually to unfold into perfect beauty. And you know if the baby of the household gets hold of the corner of the tablecloth and pulls everything on the floor, it is a bit distressing, is it not?—notwithstanding, the baby is the king of the household, or queen as the case may be. And no one thinks of excluding the child from the family because he broke some dishes. We have wondered sometimes that these children can stand so much. And, almost equally, at their parents' endurance. I have sometimes thought it would be very interesting if we could attach to their little legs some kind of an indicator to tell us how far they run in a day, and another kind of machine to tell how often they tumble. It seems to be very black to the little fellow when toys are broken, and knees are bruised. He does not think for the moment of father's estate, or of the glorious prospect awaiting his young manhood, but only of the drying of the tears.

And so, as Christians, you will get down in the dust sometimes; you will need your handkerchief; you will be tossed about; you will wonder, possibly, whether you are a child of God or not. The children of God do sometimes lose their assurance; but they do not lose their birthright. I have heard people sneer sometimes at that hymn of John Newton's:—

"'Tis a point I long to know,  
Oft it causes anxious thought,  
Do I love my Lord or no,  
Am I His, or am I not;"—

but some of us can understand it. Perhaps some of us have been made to walk through deep valleys and dark places in order that we might tell others that even in the darkness we are still God's children, that once received into His family, we are His forevermore.

Therefore, if you young believers have had a difficult time during the past week, I remind you that you are just passing through the experience of your spiritual babyhood; and that the Lord loves you just the same. The little baby is just as much the child of the household, and as dear to the father as the grown-up son, who is in partnership with his father in business. And

the humblest saint, the weakest saint of all, is as dear to the heart of God as the stalwart warrior for Christ, who goes forth winning victories in His name.

I am glad that the Lord has described our relationship in this simple metaphor, so that even the children can understand. As children "born of the will of God" we have a place in His heart and home forever, and we shall grow up into Him. And ultimately, there is the guarantee that we shall be like Christ. I do not see much prospect of it myself; and I confess I have met a lot of professing Christians, of whom honesty would compel me to say that I am afraid they are not as yet very much like Christ. My only hope for myself and for you is this—that there is a little bit of God in us, the seed which made us to live again—"Christ in you, the hope of glory."

I remember in the old land a man who used to come to my father's church; and, to be perfectly frank, I did not care much for him. I think he was a good man, and I respect his memory; but he was one of those men who was not particularly attractive to young people. He was foreman over certain works, and part of the concern was some sort of brickyard. At all events, the men employed there had to work out of doors—and many of you who have lived in England know that it rains there occasionally—sometimes, too often. One summer day the men were working away in the yard when a shower came on. They ran for shelter as they were expected to do; but the foreman was looking out of his office to see how long they were going to stay under shelter. They were not particularly anxious to get back to work, as perhaps we should not have been had we had to do the same sort of work. So the old gentleman walked around to see what the men were doing; and as he approached, one of the men, who was a bit of a wag, and who perhaps invented the story, said, "Well, Mr. so-and-so, we have just been discussing a question here; possibly you can enlighten us. We have just been saying that some people say that very pretty babies grow up to be very unattractive old people; while quite ugly or very plain children, in later life, become quite beautiful or handsome, as the case might be. Do you think there is anything in that theory?" The old man was rather taken aback for the moment, but recovering himself he said, "I do not know men, but there might be something in it." "My! My! then," said the man, "what a pretty baby you must have been!"

Now whatever degree of truth there may be in that theory as applied to the physical life, I know it is true on the one side at least, applied religiously. There is a good deal of "the old man" in some of the Lord's children; indeed, in all of us, in the beginning. And I am bound to admit that some of the babies are rather "plain," aren't they?—not much of Christ in them at the beginning. But, oh is there anything fuller of inspiration and joy than just to see the Christ-life within emerging, and the man becoming more,—and more,—and more,—and more, like Christ? There is hope for us my friend, that we shall be glorious in His eyes when the work of grace is finished, and "when he shall present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Monthly Communion Service will be held Sunday, September 3rd. A good number of new members will be received. Many who have been away during the summer will be home, and we hope to have a great gathering.

A suggested change. Last season the Pastor's weekly Bible lecture was so largely attended that there is a general feeling the work should be con-

tinued. But we believe many also feel that Monday is not the best night. Many in other churches which have Monday evening meetings would attend if another evening could be found. Our proposal therefore is this: That our three meetings be held, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, taking Thursday for the Bible lecture. This plan has many advantages. First to our own members. It divides the week, and avoids the necessity of being out two nights together. For people outside our membership, it has this advantage, that they can visit Jarvis St. without neglecting their own prayer-meeting.

As it is necessary that our Fall programme be arranged immediately, it is proposed to ask the church on Wednesday evening, September 6th, to authorize the change from Monday and Wednesday to Tuesday and Thursday—the Saturday meeting continuing. Will the members please first make it a matter of earnest prayer for Divine direction, and then talk it over with other members, and come in large numbers Wednesday next to decide it.

**A Month of Blessing.** Notwithstanding the absence of many we have had much blessing. The prayer-meetings have been well sustained, and the congregations large. Above all, we have had the presence of God with us at every service, and a good number have been converted. The first Sunday in August two were baptized, three the second Sunday, one Wednesday the 16th, seven Sunday the 27th, and three Wednesday 30th, or sixteen during the month. For this let us give thanks to God, while we still wait upon God for the flood of blessing our hearts long for.

**Sending The Gospel Witness by Mail.** Last week we began sending a copy of **The Witness** to every family in the church. At first glance some may think this involves an unwise expenditure. It has, however, many advantages. In a large church like this, with a membership scattered all over the city, every Sunday will find some families unrepresented in the services. Our present plan will insure that every family receive news of the church and a message from the pulpit every week. Another advantage is this: By mailing in time for delivery before Sunday it will be possible to announce the services in advance every week; and members reading **The Witness** before Sunday will know whether they will need extra copies when they come on Sunday. We regret that we had an insufficient supply last Sunday, but will endeavor to see that plenty are provided in future. We hope all our members will co-operate with this plan for a few weeks that we may give it a fair trial. We believe that the interest of every family is worth much more to the church than the one cent it costs to mail **The Witness**. In this connection, it would be of very great service to the office if every member would advise us of his or her correct address. This would also insure prompt delivery of **The Witness**.

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## The Church Calendar

For the week beginning Sunday, September 3rd, 1922.

### SUNDAY

- 10.00—Prayer Service in the Church Parlor, Mr. George Greenway.
- 11.00—Public Worship. The Pastor will preach.
- 3.00—The Bible School will meet.
- 2.30—Open-Air Work with the Gospel Car, starting from Jarvis Street Church.
- 5.30—Open-Air Service on Gerrard Street.
- 6.00—Prayer Meeting in Church Parlor.
- 7.00—Public Worship. The Pastor will preach.
- 8.30—Communion and Reception of Members.

**MONDAY, WEDNESDAY and SATURDAY—8.00—Prayer Service.**

**THURSDAY—8.00—Open Air Service, Gerrard St. gate of Allen Gardens.**

The Parliament St. Branch, 250 Parliament St. **Sunday:** Bible School, 3.00; Evangelistic Service, conducted by Mr. W. L. McKay, 7.00; **Thursday,** 8.00, Prayer Meeting.