

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

"IT IS FINISHED."

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, Nov. 5, 1922.
(Stenographically reported)

"And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool."—Hebrews 10: 11-13.

THESE verses tell the story of how all men seek salvation, and of the only way in which any one finds it. It is the story of certain priests whose work is never done: They stand "daily ministering and offering—not once—but oftentimes the same sacrifices"—doing the same thing over, and over, and over again; with this result, they have offered "sacrifices which can never take away sins." On the other hand, there is the story of one great Priest who "offered one sacrifice for sins for ever," and "sat down."

And now, I think we might have the benediction; and I might send you away with that text. And if you seek the guidance of His Spirit, there is no reason why every man, and woman, and boy, and girl here this evening should not be saved with an everlasting salvation. For in these verses you have the Law and the Gospel, the covenant which was done away, and that which abides.

I. First of all, the story of **The Priests Whose Work Is Never Finished.** This chapter from which we read this evening tells us that in the law there was "a shadow of good things to come." "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ"; but the law was never designed to save anybody; nor was anybody ever justified by the deeds of the law. The Old Testament dispensation is full of types and of symbols which are very instructive; for they are "a shadow of good things to come." But they made no one perfect. Even those who faithfully observed the ceremonies of the law were not thereby perfected. And instructive as these types and symbols are, having in

them the picture of the greater Priest, and the greater Sacrifice which was yet to come, and which was yet to be offered; everywhere there is a discovery of the impotence of the law, of that which "the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh." The law found its limitations in the flesh: the law set before men an objective standard of life; but it provided no power whereby that standard might be translated into actual experience, and transmuted into a godlike character. The standard was there; the pattern, the example were there; but the flesh was impotent to realize the divine ideal. The ministry of the priests, too, was full of instruction: "Every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifice." But there was a remembrance of sin every year; and their failure so to minister to the human conscience that man "should have no more conscience of sins," all the time pointed to the necessity of there arising a greater Priest, who should offer a sufficient sacrifice; who should do for poor lost sinners, what poor sinners had never been able to do for themselves.

The temple was a place of worship; but with the temple furniture there was no seat provided. There was the table of shewbread, and the brazen altar, and the altar of incense; there were all the implements of sacrifice; within the veil there was the ark of the covenant, with the overshadowing mercy-seat. But nowhere within the temple was there a place for a priest to sit down; because his work was never done. He had to stand every day, doing the same things again, and again, and again; but all his sacrifices failed to take away sins.

And that represents the human effort in all ages to find an answer to the greatest of all questions, "How shall man be just with God?" There is in every man a consciousness of sin. Do not misunderstand: I do not mean such a knowledge of sin as is wrought in a man only by the power of the Holy Spirit; but there is a consciousness of imperfection, a realization that somehow or another he has fallen short of the highest possibilities of life. It is one thing to know that you are ill: it is quite another thing to know precisely what is the matter with you. It is one thing to know that you are in the grip of some kind of disease: it is quite another thing to know the nature of the malady, and to know someone who is in possession of a remedy.

Now all men know they are sick; but they do not know just what is the matter with them. When God the Holy Spirit works in the heart and conscience a true conviction of sin; when a man is made to know the nature of sin; when he is led to cry out, as David did, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight"; when a man comes to see that his sin is primarily a sin against God, rather than against his neighbour—whatever the character of the sin, when he comes to see that every sin is a sin against God, then he comes to realize that only God can deal with it. But not realizing that, he knows only that there is some moral imperfection; that the life is wrong; that when he would do good, evil is present with him; he knows that there is a law in his members bringing him into bondage, and preventing him from realizing even his own inadequate ideals of life.

Well, such a consciousness of sin as that leads always to an effort in the direction of self-help; and wherever you have a man who, while knowing that he is not what he ought to be, does not know the deadly nature of sin, you have a priest upon his feet, "standing daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins." That lies at the basis of all heathen religions, of all naturalistic philosophies: it is a human attempt to find some means by which this life, this eccentric life, that is morally off centre, and out of harmony with God's laws—everywhere these religions are but varied expressions of the universal human desire to get back

into centre, and to relate one's self rightly to the laws that are, and to the powers that be; and all because men do not know the deadly nature of sin, nor the character of God whom the sin offends.

And it is ever the old story, "standing daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices"—whether they be human sacrifices; whether they be the prayer-wheel; or an attempt by some other means to lay up a store of merit somewhere, that in the great day when the books are opened will be reckoned to our accounts: it is all the same thing.

Moreover, there are many forms of Christianity, or rather, forms of religion, which bear the Christian name—which also are characterized by the futile ministry of standing priests doing the same thing over and over again, without taking away sin.

We are glad to have many Roman Catholics come in here; and I have not anything to say against Roman Catholics; it is my duty, however, to point out the failure of Roman Catholicism. It is a system that I venture to believe cannot stand in the light of God's Holy Word; and yet I should accomplish nothing by mere denunciation. But I remind you, my friends, that the sacrifice of the mass is a repetition of this,—“priests standing daily ministering,” doing the same thing over and over again. Sin is never taken away by that means. And so of all your prayers, and your penances, and all the severe discipline of that system, it is but a modern manifestation of this ancient principle, standing “daily ministering,” and yet never getting the thing done.

And there are forms of Protestantism, so called, which are not a whit better—which are just as far away from the truth of the gospel as Roman Catholicism itself. There are Protestants, so called, who imagine that God must take account of their praying, or their saying of prayers, their going to church, their observance of what they call the “sacrament”; making the very elements which are but symbols of the broken body and shed blood of our Lord a sacrifice, as though they conferred merit, as though somehow or another observance of this would help to balance God's books in favour of the sinner.

But there is no peace for the conscience; there is no rest for the soul, in that view of the Christian religion. There can be no abiding satisfaction for a hungry soul that is based upon any kind of human effort. Then, too, there are others who are not religious at all in the sense of identifying themselves with any religious body, or making any profession of religion, who yet are morally circumspect; they are honourable in business; they are amiable in their social relations; they are faithful in all the duties of life; and on that low plane, for it is low compared with the higher—let me rather make it comparative, and say on that lower plane of a man's merely human relationships, they pride themselves in having violated no law whatsoever. The man says, “If there be not salvation for me, if indeed there be a future life, then for whom is salvation reserved?” But upon what does his hope of the future depend? Upon the priest who daily ministers offering oftentimes the same sacrifices. The man depends for his eternal salvation upon his own morality, upon his own doings, upon his own efforts.

There are other applications of the principle; but if there is a man or woman here this evening who has any expectation whatsoever of standing at last in the presence of God in peace, meeting Him face to face “with joy, and not with grief,” on the basis of what he himself is, or what he himself can accomplish; he belongs to the class represented by these ancient priests whose work was never done. How many a church-member you will find to-day who will answer you, if you put the question to him—Are you saved? Have you

eternal life? Have you everlasting salvation?—how many there are who would say, "I cannot say that, sir. I am not sure of that. I cannot be sure of that until I get yonder!" Why? Because you are saying in your heart, "I am a priest who must stand daily ministering right up to the last hour of the last day of my life, doing oftentimes the same thing; but I have no assurance in my heart that the law of God has been satisfied; that the outraged nature of God has been appeased; and that I, a guilty rebel against His law, have been reconciled to Him."

II. But let me read you now the better story! "Every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever sat down." Why? **Because His work was finished:** once and for all He had dealt with sin to the satisfaction of God Himself; and He "sat down on the right hand of God."

The death of Jesus then was a sacrifice for sin. It was in a certain sense the consummation of a sublime example. He was the most perfect man the world has ever seen; and He lived the most perfect life. He wrought out a flawless righteousness; and we are admonished to "consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." We are reminded that "when he was reviled, he reviled not again . . . but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." We are to regard Him as our example; for in this He left us an example, "that we should follow his steps." But remember while Jesus is set before you only as an example; and while the gospel preached to you is merely an exhortation to follow His example; you have the Old Testament and not the New. "Every priest standing daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices." Shall I be saved if I follow Him all the way?

But that is not the gospel! It is a reversal of the order of the gospel. Jesus is an example to souls who have been quickened by His Spirit; but He is not an example to souls who are "dead in trespasses and sins." He is an example to the children whom God has made free by the power of His Spirit; but He is not an example to those who are bound fast in the chains of sin, and who cannot go whither the Lamb would lead them. No, beware, beware, of that interpretation of the gospel which is so popular, which consists of making Jesus an example only! "Stand up upon your feet, and play the man," says somebody. "The way to preach the gospel is to appeal to the heroic." But what are you going to do with the impotent man, of whom I was speaking two or three weeks ago, who not only could not follow after Jesus, but could not even get down into the water, although he was at the edge of the pool? Salvation by ideals is no gospel for men who know the plague of their own hearts. It may be thought to be a gospel by the man who knows there is something wrong with him, but who does not know the nature of his malady. But when a man comes to see that sin is a thing that has in it the malignancy of the pit of hell; that it is a thing that disturbs the moral balance of the universe, and lays its protest before the throne of God, and which drove the spear into the very heart of Jesus—when a man comes to see what sin is, he learns that if he is to be saved he must have more than an example to stimulate and direct his own efforts; when he sees the stain of it, the guilt of it, the heinousness of it, he feels that somewhere there should be a pit that is bottomless in which his sin can be buried out of God's sight; and he asks for a sacrifice. Then nothing but blood will do!

"This Man" came to do the work that all the world had failed to do. Do not mock us by half measures! He "offered one sacrifice for sins." What was that sacrifice? O it is a wonderful word! I think I could preach upon it for a

year. Listen! "In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast no pleasure," as though God said, "What can you do to honour my law?" "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he might establish the second." He set aside the poor impotent will of sinful man; and He substituted for it the will of Omnipotence! And Jesus came and said, "I will honour God's law"; and by the righteousness of His will wrought out a price that He might pay it for our redemption: He "offered one sacrifice for sins for ever." Only one! For there was no other. For in that one, may I reverently say, He emptied heaven's exchequer. In the blood of Jesus Christ you have the wealth of the universe in solution. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son." By "one sacrifice for sins for ever" did this Man Jesus complete His work.

Well, then, if that be so, is it any wonder that the gospel makes no provision for further sacrifice? Why should it? We do not need any priests now; for this Man "offered one sacrifice for sins for ever"; and finished the work. What will you add to it, my friend? Some of you who have been seeking salvation for years, perhaps—what will you add to the perfect righteousness of Jesus? How can you augment the value of the precious blood? If God is not satisfied with what Jesus did, is there any hope that He will ever be satisfied with what you do? If the infinite sacrifice of the Incarnate God does not restore the balance, and cancel your indebtedness, then there is no hope that anything you or I can do will add to His completed work.

But why did He sit down? He sat down because there was no longer reason for Him to stand. "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever sat down on the right hand of God." Who is He? He was your substitute and representative, when there on the cross He hung with crown of thorns and bleeding hands and feet and side:

"Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut his glories in,
When Christ, the mighty Maker, died
For man, His creature's sin."

In that hour as your representative, He went into the outer darkness tasting death for every man; and while in that state of rejection, He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Forsaken! Conscious He was of the separation between Himself and His Father; but now He is seated "on the right hand of God." What does it mean? It means that God has accepted His sacrifice; it means that God has accepted Him as your representative: as truly as He was your representative when He declared He was forsaken, so now He is your representative in His session on the right hand of the Majesty on high. And the difference between the two—the outer darkness, and the eternal glory—has been made by His infinite sacrifice which He offered once for all your sins.

"From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool." He "sat down on the right hand of God." And in that seat of honour and authority He knows that the ultimate victory over all evil is assured; and in Him ultimate victory is assured to all believers.

III. What is it to believe in Jesus? It is just to call Him by your own name in order that He may call you by His. What is it to be a Christian? It is to look at Jesus dying and saying, "There am I;" to see the law shut fast the sepulchre and set its seal, and to say, "There am I;" and to see Him again as He breaks the bands of death and comes forth in resurrection, life and light and power, and following Him up the shining way by faith, even to the right

hand of God,—“From henceforth expecting till his enemies are made his footstool,” and to say, “There, too, am I, in the glory with Him!”

What is it to be a Christian? “Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands.” “But now we see not yet all things put under him.” Oh, no, man was made to wear a crown, to sit upon a throne, to sway a sceptre, to be a king; but he is without his kingdom. “We see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus.” There He is!—the Representative, the Pledge of ultimate triumph for ever to every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what it is to be a Christian—to be identified with Him in death, to share His life, to share His honour, to share His glory, to share His absolute victory over all His foes: “He gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”

Are you a Christian? If you are not, I want to tell you why you are not. The only controversy God has with any man concerns that man's estimate of His Son. But you say, “Sir, it is my sins that shut me out of heaven.” No, your sins were laid upon Him. “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” No sin you ever committed, or ever can commit short of the rejection of Jesus, need shut you out of the presence of God. Moody used to say when preaching from that great verse, “We go in by one All, and come out by the other All.” “All we like sheep have gone astray”—there we go; “and the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all”—there we come out into liberty, saved by His atoning sacrifice. But someone says, “It is my sinfulness. I can understand how my sins can be forgiven; but my sinfulness—the thing that is inherent; that is in the blood; that colors my thought; that enslaves my will; that makes me the impotent creature I am! I could never dwell in the presence of God with this sinfulness, if even past and future sins were forgiven.” No, you could not. But, remember: He is on the right hand of God; and the Scripture says, “Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body (or the body of our humiliation) that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” By the power of His Spirit He can make you a new creature, “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”

It is neither your sins nor your sin that will shut you out of heaven; for all that has been provided for at the place called Calvary. There is only one thing; and that is your estimate of Jesus Christ. God's estimate of His Son is proclaimed by the fact that He has raised the Crucified to His right hand; it is proclaimed by the fact that God has accepted His sacrifice in your behalf; that He Who was forsaken is now accepted and enthroned in glory. And the moment you accept God's estimate of your sin and of His Son; the moment you look to Him as your sin-bearer, your substitute, your Saviour—that moment there is an end of controversy between your soul and God. “This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” “He that believeth on him is not condemned.” However great a sinner He may have been; however great a sinner He may now be; “He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not—however righteous, however honourable, however great in the estimation of men—he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

Can I make it any plainer? Can I make it any simpler than that? Do we not all see it to-night by the grace of the Spirit? Shall we leave the priests whose work is never finished, and shall we trust the Priest whose work is done? Shall we turn away from the “sacrifices which can never take away

sins," and rest our hope in the Sacrifice made once forever? That is your choice: that is the choice of every man. Have you made it? Even while I have been speaking, has the Holy Spirit just opened your understanding so that you now say, "I see it, sir. I will look to Jesus. I will trust Him altogether, upon the cross, in the grave, in the resurrection, in the glory. He is mine all the way through; and I believe His Word. I have everlasting life."

Well, if you believe with your heart unto righteousness, will you make confession of it? I wonder is there some man or woman here this evening upon whom that truth has dawned, either to-night or at some other time, but who has never just stepped from one side to the other, and taken his or her stand with the Priest whose work is done? Do you not think you ought to? Can you not see that the whole weary world is longing for that perfected salvation? Do you not know that is what men and women want in Toronto more than anything else?—not mere church membership—not that: they want rest of conscience, the cleansing of the blood, the satisfaction that can come only through personal acquaintance with Jesus Christ. If you have it, then you ought to be openly on His side, so that you might be a witness for Him. And that is why I appeal to you to make your confession to-night. Does anybody object to it?

In apostolic times it was not uncommon as the apostles preached, for those who heard to say, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter told them what to do. But they indicated their desire for salvation. And you remember how Paul in Lystra saw the impotent man, and perceived "that he had faith to be healed." And I think he said, "Stand on your feet, and let this whole crowd know that you have faith to be healed." And he got up. The Book is full of it. There came to Jesus a woman who desired to be healed. O, this ancient Book is the most modern book in the world! She wanted to be healed; but she did not want anybody to know about it. She came through the crowd; and she said, "If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." Somehow or another she managed to get near enough to touch His garment, and instantly she was made whole of her plague. "And Jesus said, Who touched me?" His disciples said, "Master, the multitude throng thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me." And when the woman saw that she was found out, she came and fell at His feet and told Him all the truth. He compelled confession. He has promised that if we confess Him before men, He will confess us before the Father. That means to-night—not by and by at the judgment. The moment you and I believe in Him, and confess Him, that moment He identifies Himself with us, and He confesses us in the presence of the holy angels. Our names are recorded there; and we are as safe as if we were actually within the gates of pearl.

Do you trust Him? Have you never confessed Him? Or, if the way is not clear, if the light is just dawning and you have moved towards the light, will you rise in your pew and by rising say, "I want to make the acquaintance of the Priest whose work is done."

(Four responded to this invitation and were soundly converted, one a Jewess who saw her Messiah, and, with her husband, has since been baptized.)

"CONTINUING INSTANT IN PRAYER."

The last two weeks have been the best in our history. Our prayer meetings have reached a higher mark than ever before. The spirit of grace and of supplication is being poured upon God's people. Many from other churches are coming to join in the ministry of intercession; and God is making bare His arm in the conversion of souls every week. Among the converts, Nov. 5th, was a lady who belonged to the "chosen seed of Israel's race." Perhaps there is no one who can rejoice more in seeing God in the face of Jesus Christ than a Jew. When one has earnestly longed for Messiah to come, but

has been taught that He has not yet appeared, and then receives the touch of the Spirit of God and learns that He has come in the person of Christ—what a joy to behold Him! What wonder that our dear friend, in her new-found joy, exclaimed, "I wish I could bring a million souls to Jesus!" It was an inexpressible joy to the whole church to witness the baptism of this rejoicing believer and her husband, who came fully into the light at the same time as his wife. We have been asking the Lord for unusual conversions, or such as would show unmistakably that the work is of God. And He is answering our prayer. "Blindness in part is happened unto Israel"; and only the light which shone upon Saul of Tarsus upon the Damascus road can penetrate that darkness. Let us continue to pray that in that Light many others, both Jews and Gentiles, may see light.

Another case is that of a young lady who had occasionally attended Jarvis Street for years. About eighteen months ago she went to Vancouver, B.C. But she says the Lord brought her back across the Continent that she might be converted where she had been convicted. She says she was a church-member, and thought she was all right until the spirit of God showed her she had not been born again. Four or five weeks ago she was converted one Sunday evening. Last week when she applied for baptism, she said she believed Christians should give at least a tenth to the Lord, and she desired to do so; and further, that as she had not done so heretofore, she felt that as far as was possible, she should make up the arrears of the tenth! Who but the spirit of God could make the conscience so sensitive? When this new convert came to meet the committee she handed the Pastor a note saying that she desired to put a thank-offering upon the altar before her baptism, and therefore enclosed a cheque. The cheque was for one hundred and fifty dollars. And this lady is a wage-earner—as most of our people are.

Many have wondered how Jarvis Street is being maintained financially. The foregoing incident tells the story: We have a great God who makes His people willing. And may not this incident contain a message from the Lord for us all? What if every member were to give "at least a tenth"? What if every member were, so far as possible, to make up arrears? The Lord's treasury would overflow, and we should be able to extend our work in many directions. Let the story teach us this lesson, that when the heart is filled with the love of Christ, the hand will be opened. And this further lesson also: That we should pray about our financial affairs continually, because the church's financial ability will be proportioned to her spiritual health. Who can doubt that if we give out of love for Christ, and by direction of His Spirit, the spiritual potential of our material gifts will be greatly increased?

St. Clair Ave. Church (Cor. Wychwood) will entertain the next Open Board Meeting, on the **fourth Thursday, Nov. 23rd, at 10.15 a.m.** Plans for Home Mission work for the coming year will be explained. Do not miss this opportunity for information and inspiration. Bring sandwiches as usual.

The Church Calendar

For the week beginning Sunday, November 19th, 1922.

Sunday

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

10.30—**Communion Service.**

11.00—**Public Worship.** The Pastor will preach.

3.00—**The Bible School** will meet.

6.00—**Prayer Meeting** in Church Parlor.

7.00—**Public Worship**—The Pastor will preach. Baptism will be administered.

Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday—8.00—Prayer Service.

Wednesday—Junior Mid-Week Service—7.15.

The Parliament St. Branch, 250 Parliament St. Sunday: Bible School, 3.00;

Evangelistic Service, conducted by Mr. W. L. McKay, 7.00.

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