

# The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED WEEKLY

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

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

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No. 36

## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

**WAKE UP! GET UP! LIGHT UP!**

**A Sermon by the Pastor.**

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday evening, Jan. 7th, 1923.  
(Stenographically reported.)

"Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."—Ephesians 5: 14.

**W**HEN awaiting your train at a railway station you ask nothing of the one who announces your train but that he speak clearly and plainly, so that you will be sure to get the right train. When at the crossroads seeking direction, you do not expect to find on the finger-post a quotation from Tennyson, or from Shakespeare, or some fine words written in a language you do not understand; but you hope to find in clear, bold type written in your mother tongue, a simple word that will tell you the way home. And I am more and more convinced of the necessity of speaking simply and plainly to poor sinners about the things of God.

This evening, therefore, I come to you with plain and very homely speech. I have selected a text which is easily understood, and which needs no introduction whatever. It calls upon men to wake up, and to get up, to throw up the blinds and let in the light. There is not one of you here this evening who cannot understand that: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

I. The sinner's natural condition then is represented under the figure of sleep. He is said to be asleep. It is descriptive of a state of darkness. His eyes are closed. He is not only in darkness; but he is himself darkness. There is darkness within. It is difficult to preach to people who are physically asleep: it is still more difficult to preach to people who are spiritually so. And, indeed, it would be without profit, had we not every reason to believe that the Spirit of God would awaken the sleeper and lead him to arise.

To some here this evening the great truths of the gospel are a mystery. Even the alphabet of Christian experience is a secret, which you cannot understand: it is apparently entirely beyond you. In such case mere reasoning will

accomplish nothing. You need to be shaken by the Spirit of God, or called by His voice that your spirit may be awakened; that your eyes may be opened; that you may have within you the inner light. There is a sense in which the whole world is in darkness spiritually. The sinner is not only in darkness; but he is darkness itself. "If, therefore," said Jesus, "the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" If your reason is untouched by the Spirit of God; if your imagination is uncleaned by the divine Spirit; if your conscience is unawakened; if your faculties are benumbed; you have no power to deal with the great verities of the Christian religion—"if, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" I am not at all disturbed by the reasonings of natural men, nor surprised when even a great scholar sets his reason against the Word of divine revelation. I know that so far as spiritual things are concerned, he is asleep; his faculties are unawakened; he has no power to apprehend the truth of the gospel; and that which is perfectly simple to the babe in Christ, that which comes within the understanding of the simplest soul when touched by the Spirit of God, is utterly beyond the apprehension of the soul that is unawakened. And so I come to you this evening, in the name of the Lord, and call upon you to awake.

Sleep is a state of unconsciousness. What wonders may take place around the man who is asleep, without his knowledge! His dearest friend may stoop over him as he lies wrapped in slumber—the one for whom his heart is longing, the one without whose presence and companionship life can never be rich and beautiful; but he sleeps on, unaware of the presence of the one he loves. Or, it may be, right beside him is placed a casket of precious jewels—a fortune within his reach—but he knows nothing about it. Or, another sleeps soundly while his house is wrapped in flames, and death stealthily approaches him; but, unaware of the danger, he sleeps on.

And there are people here this evening like that—in a state of spiritual unconsciousness, cut off from the spiritual realm. They have no correspondence with it at all. They are in danger of being swallowed up with the flames; but they do not know it. On the other hand, there is within reach of the hand of faith "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time"; but they are poor, and neglect the wealth that is within their reach.

The sleeper is utterly helpless. The strongest, when asleep, falls prey to the weakest. You recall the story of that man of power called Samson; how they tried by every means to discover his strength and failed; for when they raised the cry, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson," he arose in his might and they fled before him. But while he slept in the lap of Delilah the shears were applied to his locks, and his strength departed while he was yet asleep: he was perfectly helpless, because he thus slumbered. And you remember Sisera also, the mighty man of war; how he came into the tent, and how "she brought forth butter in a lordly dish"; and how Jael, at last, while he was asleep, drove the nail through his temple; and "the mother of Sisera looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots?" but the mighty man never came home, because he had gone to sleep in the enemy's camp. And you remember, too, how Saul went to sleep in the cave; and how David, the very man whom he hunted, came stealthily to his bolster and took from him his spear, and the cruse of water; and when he had withdrawn himself to a safe dis-

tance he lifted up his voice and shouted to Saul to show him that even the mighty Saul had been at his mercy.

O sleeping sinner, you are asleep on the edge of a precipice: but roll over the edge, and into the bottomless Pit you must go! I know it is not popular to say that; but it is the truth of God's Word. You are in an enemy's country. "Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." And the soul that is asleep has no power of self-defence, but is utterly at the mercy of his enemy.

It is possible to induce sleep by the power of hypnotism. The subject yields his will and all his faculties to the hypnotic influence of another personality, and, falling into a state of sleep, becomes obedient to the one who has thus hypnotized him. That is the explanation of the conduct of many on the moral and spiritual plane. You see them going on in the ways of evil. Other people see that they are headed straight for the precipice; but they cannot see it. They are hypnotized; they are under the spell of the enemy of souls, going certainly to their destruction.

Some are put to sleep in other ways. They drink of the devil's cup, and sleep all the more soundly for doing so. We all have the great enemy in hot pursuit of us, as we observed last Sunday evening; and his agents are directed to render men, hypnotically or narcotically, his easy prey, by keeping them asleep.

Some of you may have been persuaded that the opposite of what I have said is true. There is a man who is living in a little unfurnished room. There is no fire in the grate; no food on the table; no money to provide the means of sustenance; but he goes to sleep. While asleep he dreams, and behold! he is walking in some great palace. The banquet is spread; and there are royal dainties spread before him; courtiers wait upon him; and he is in the presence of the king. He is perfectly happy; but his happiness is only "the baseless fabric of a vision" after all. He wakes at last to ask, Where is the banquet? where is the music? where are all the royal attendants? only to discover that his pleasure was a dream. Thus, there are some who say, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." O the tragedy of it that men should live in the realm of the imagination and refuse to face the realities of life! There is another. He is distressed beyond measure. The law has set its seal upon all that he owned: the bailiff has taken full possession: he is utterly bankrupt. But he goes to sleep and dreams that his bills are paid; that he has a great bank account; that he is rich and independent. But to him also there is a cruel awakening when he discovers the truth. Still another boasts of his freedom. He says he can go where he will: he has golden bracelets upon his wrists; he wears jewelled anklets; he boasts that he is one of the freest of men. But it is all a dream. For the truth is, he is a prisoner in chains; he has no freedom at all. What he calls jewels and ornaments are the manacles which forbid him to wander abroad; while iron doors are locked against him, and he could not move if he would. Notwithstanding, in his dream he is a free man. Yet another imagines that he has passed out of some great darkness, out where the birds are singing, and the flowers are blooming, and little children are merrily dancing about at their play. He walks where he will in God's free world, happy, unspeakably happy, to be alive, until someone comes to awaken him! He has been sleeping soundly, and dreaming happily. But as he awakens there beside him stands

the warder, and with him the hangman with his rope; and just outside, the gallows awaiting him; for he is condemned already—a man who is doomed and damned, though in his dream he thought himself a prince!

Thus, my friend, the sleeping sinner persuades himself that all debts are paid, that sin is merely a figment of the imagination, that it is not a real manacle. And as for the divine judgments, and the great day of reckoning, that is a thing of the past. I know there are men who preach that; but, consciously or unconsciously, such preachers are the devil's agents; and I want solemnly to say that it were better that such men had never been born. When a man stands in the name of the Lord, and encourages men to go on in their sin, that man is the chiefest of the devil's agents on earth. "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." "He that believeth not is condemned already." That is the Word of the Lord. "Awake thou that sleepest!" "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord!" There is no other word worth hearing. If the Bible be not true, if I must put it aside, then I know absolutely nothing about the future—although I know as much as any man alive about it, and that is absolutely nothing; we are still in the darkness. No man has any right to traffic in the souls of men. And unless God has spoken, no man alive is competent to direct another with respect to the future life. But, blessed be God! we know that this is God's Word; we know that God has spoken. He has spoken in the Person of his Son, and He has set His seal to this Holy Book; and He says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." "Awake thou that sleepest." O may God awaken everyone to face the facts, to look at the actualities of life! Let me sound the alarm again in the name of the Lord: "Awake thou that sleepest!" Awake! Awake! Awake thou that sleepest!

This Bible is saying every day we live, "I told you so." You cannot pick up your morning paper without finding the truth of this Holy Word confirmed. And if it be true in its general outlook upon the world and upon the future, it is true—and that is the main thing that concerns me to-night—it is true with respect to you, my brother.

"Awake thou that sleepest." There are some people who are light sleepers. You can hardly step, but they are awake, and say, "What is the matter?" And there are some other people, when once they get to sleep, O how they sleep! When you have travelled by night how you have wished that some people were not such sound sleepers! for some people sleep soundly and loudly, too! But we say of someone, "He slept like a log. You could not waken him." When the devil puts a man to sleep, he sleeps soundly; he sleeps the sleep of death at last, unless God by His grace awakens him. I would fain be an alarm clock this evening, and try to awaken the sinner, and lead him to face these tremendous truths: "Awake thou that sleepest! Awake! Awake!"

I trust there are some here this evening who are rubbing their eyes, and saying, "Well, I am not prepared to deny what you have said. I am not among those who refuse to believe the truth of that Word. I believe that Jesus is the Son of God. I believe that He died on Calvary's cross for me. I believe that salvation is of grace; and that God stands ready to blot out my sins. I believe all that; and I know that the way of sin is not profitable, that the way of the transgressor is hard." You can almost see the man

rubbing his soul's eyes, and awaking. If this be true of any here, I praise God, for you are already awake.

II. But there is something else: Arise from the dead. It is one thing to wake up; but it is another thing to get up; as every mother here knows, who has to call the children in the morning. That is the truth of this text, Arise, now that you are awake! Arise! get up!

Ah, sometimes you have wished you were up, have you not? Wide awake, but O, these cold winter mornings, especially if the furnace is low and the room chilly,—what a trouble to get up! But it is of no use to be awake if we do not get up. When the house is on fire and the alarm is sounded; what if an inmate of the burning house should say, "I am wide awake, thank you; you need not trouble further." That will not save him. "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise," get up and get out; repent, turn away from your sin, turn to the Lord Jesus with full purpose of heart.

There are people here who have been awake for a long time. You have long known your need of a Saviour; and been wide awake to the perils to which you stand exposed, while out of Christ; but you have not got up. And sometimes you have said, "I wish I were a Christian. I wish I were up, and that my sins were washed away. I wish I had the robes of righteousness that I hear about, wrapping me about,—and the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace upon my feet, and the ring upon my finger. I wish I were established in the ways of righteousness, and well on the way to glory." But when are you going to begin? When are you going to get up? "Arise from the dead!"

Here is another Scripture. Jesus came to the grave: "It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. . . Then they took away the stone." There was the rocky sepulchre, and perhaps many dead bodies were entombed within. Jesus stood without, and He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus." That is my text: "Awake thou that sleepest." And Lazarus, I suppose, opened his eyes; and he began to feel the blood flowing through his veins, the heart began to beat, and the pulse to bound; and suddenly the man discovered that he was alive—awake, aroused by the life-call of the Son of God. Mary and Martha had called him; I fancy I see them leaning over him and saying, as we have so often heard, "Lazarus, do you not know me?" But there was no response. And at last they carried him out and put him in the grave. But now when it is opened, and another voice cries, "Lazarus," there was something in that voice that was in no other voice: "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live."

Jesus came to awaken us out of sleep. He announced His programme when He said to His disciples, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." He came from the glory that He might awaken somebody here out of sleep. But that was not all. He said, "Lazarus," and he awakened; and then He said, "Come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith, Loose him, and let him go." Lazarus not only awoke; he arose at the call of the Lord Jesus! Will you, awakened sinner, "arise" and "come forth"? Will you arise to-night? Will you come forth? Will you turn with full purpose of heart to the Lord Jesus, and have done with the old life?

Do you know what this baptism meant this evening? You say, "Just

an ordinance; just a way into a Baptist church." Not at all. That is not what it means in the Scripture. It is a symbol of the grave of the Lord Jesus: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; and like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." And they who went down into the water this evening made confession of this tremendous truth, that between them and the old life lies the grave of Jesus. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." They heard the Holy Spirit call, "Awake!" and they awoke. "Arise from the dead," and they arose, and went through the grave in a figure, confessing to you, my friends, what had been their actual experience,—that they arose from the dead, and in a figure buried the old life in the grave of Jesus; henceforth to walk in newness of life.

That is what it is to be a Christian. I would not exert myself to multiply the number of nominal Christians. I would not exert myself to put the name of Christian upon unregenerate men and women. There are too many already. It is the greatest hindrance to the cause of Christ everywhere, that men and women are called Christians who are not Christians. And the need of the hour is, that the Church of Jesus Christ should aim not at quantity but at quality; that the Church should be a witnessing Church, full of men and women who are not only awake, but who have arisen from the dead, and who are alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Are you alive?

III. One other thing: someone says, "I would come, sir, if I could see my way clearly before me: if only I knew all that is involved in the Christian life, I would come." You will never come if you wait until you know that; for "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day"; we enter upon it when the day dawns. I know it is hard to get up in the winter time before the sun, when everything is dark. In the early morning hours, how unpleasant it is to bestir one's self in the dark, and have to feel your way about! And many people feel like that: "If only the sun were shining, sir; if only my soul were flooded with light; then I would get up. But I am waiting for the sun to rise." Ah, but the Sun rose long ago! The Sun is ascending the heavens, "the night is far spent, the day is at hand." The truth is, it is daytime already. Jesus has come; the Light of the world is here; but you are blinded; you can close the shutters of your room and imagine it is still night; you can shut away the sunbeams from your eyes so that you can sleep on. And that is just what has occurred in the case of men and women here who are not Christians: "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." The devil says, "Pull down the blind, shut out God's sunlight, do not disturb him, let him sleep on;" but there is light for you, if you will arise. "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." And if you arise, you shall discover that the day has dawned: in the very act of obedience the joy of salvation will come: the very moment you turn your heart toward God, He will come to you.

There was a woman who was a member of my congregation some years ago, who attended every service, morning, afternoon, and evening on Sunday, the prayer-meeting, and any special services that were held; I could always

depend upon her being there. And yet, she was not a Christian. When I talked to her, she would agree to everything I said. She would declare that she believed in Jesus: she knew she was a sinner; she wanted to be saved; she believed He could save her; she had the utmost confidence that He was the Son of God. But yet she was not a Christian; she had no joy; no peace; no power: intellectually, she was convinced; there was a sense in which she was wide awake. One Sunday morning I had spoken to many people; and there were very few left in the church. I happened to meet her down at the end of the aisle; and I shook hands with her. I confess I had almost wearied of trying to lead her into the light. I had spoken to her scores of times, and seemed to make no progress at all. And that morning, I said, "Mrs. so-and-so, when are you going to make this great decision?" She said, "I do not know, Pastor. You know my interest. We have talked about it many times; but I seem to make no progress whatever. I am just in the place I was years ago."—She was awake, but still in bed. She had not got up. And I said to her, "I think I know what is the matter with you." "Well," she said, "I wish you would tell me." I said, "I have told you before; but I will tell you again. It is because you want to be a disciple of Jesus secretly; you will not arise; you will not openly avow your faith in Christ; you will not confess Him before men; and until you do, He will not confess you before His Father and His angels." She said, "I pray to Him every day; I call upon Him every morning and every night; I ask Him to forgive my sins; but I have no joy, and no assurance that I am accepted in Christ; and I do not know what more to do." (Then I quoted this text: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.") I said, "You believe in your heart?" "I do," she said, "Then," I said, "will you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord?" "How shall I?" By this time everybody had gone, except, I think, three women who were standing talking at the end of the church. I have always blessed God for the people who are not in a hurry to get out of church, who love the habitation of God's house, and the place where His honour dwelleth. There were three women lingering talking; and I said to her, "If you believe in your heart, go up and tell them that you believe that Jesus Christ is your Saviour. That is what the Lord says: Confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus." She hesitated for a moment, and then she said, "I will." She began to walk up the aisle, and literally, she had only taken a few steps when she broke into a run, and when she reached them she exclaimed, "I want to tell you I am saved." She proved one of the brightest Christians I have ever known. Some years after that, when great affliction came upon her, she wrote me from an American city to tell me of the joy of the Lord that was in her soul, and how the angel of the Lord had encamped round about her, and had delivered her.

"Christ shall give thee light;" He will open the way; He will flood your soul with light; but you must "arise from the dead," as well as awake from your sleep. Will you come to breakfast? It is all ready. Will you break your soul's long fast? Will you come? O yes, the breakfast table is the banquetting table which the Lord Jesus provides. Awake! Arise! Throw up the blinds and let in the Light! Will you come now? (How many are there who this evening will say, "I will arise and go unto my Father?")

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#### NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

**The Pastor's Bible Lectures.**—Last Tuesday the Lecture Hall was practically filled. There were very few chairs in the large hall vacant, although it was the coldest night Toronto had known for three years, and the heavy snow still in the streets, made motor traffic difficult. These things considered, the attendance indicated an extraordinary interest. No subject is of such perennial interest as the Word of God. The third lecture of the series will be delivered Tuesday, Jan. 23rd.

**The Bible Lectures Printed.**—Each lecture is stenographically reported, and if the demand warrants it, every lecture of the series will be printed and

ready for sale the Tuesday following delivery. No. 1, "The Importance of Motive in Bible Study," was on sale last Tuesday. There will be no financial profit from the lectures, but we estimate that if we sell 400 a week at ten cents per copy the proceeds, with the collection taken at each lecture, will just about cover the cost. We ask all who read this note to assist in making the continuance of the publication possible by helping the sale of these lectures. Out-of-town Witness readers may have the lectures at the same price, ten cents each, as they can be mailed with their weekly copy of The Gospel Witness without extra postage. If you want the weekly lecture sent you for ten weeks send a dollar to the Church office. Other than Witness subscribers, please add one cent per week for postage. Each Lecture is printed in a twelve-page booklet, a slightly smaller page than The Witness, and in a size larger type. Write at once if you want the whole series.

**Jarvis St. Sunday School.** The Annual meeting of the Officers and Teachers will be held on Monday next, January 22nd, at 7.45 p.m. Reports of the past year's activities will be presented, followed by the Election of Officers for the ensuing year. A full attendance is desired.

**Junior Mid-Week Gospel Service.** These cheerful and helpful gatherings for the children and young folks have been resumed after the break due to the Christmas Festivities. On Wednesday next, Jan. 24th, a visit is expected from Miss Clarkson, a devoted Christian, and who has been greatly used of God in the salvation of scores of boys and girls in Toronto, and who will give an illustrated Gospel talk in her own inimitable style. "Uncle Hutch" and "Cousin Fred" will assist as usual, and a good time is expected.

**Dorcas Society.** Madam Dorcas will hold her New Year reception on Thursday, January 25th, from 2 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. in the Church Parlor. No invitation cards are needed for all the ladies of the church and congregation are cordially invited and will receive a hearty welcome. It is hoped that this invitation will be accepted by many of the new members of the church. Come prepared to sew or quilt by bringing thimbles and scissors. The cupboards are almost empty, and Madame Dorcas will need many willing hands and generous hearts to provide for the many calls that are sure to come. If you are not yet interested in the work, read Acts 9:36-43 again, and you will find there the charter under which Dorcas still "carries-on." Tea will be served at 6.30 to which gentlemen are invited. A collection is taken at the table to defray expenses; and any surplus is used in the purchase of material. A generous offering is asked for.

**Remember the King's Banquet.**—Thursday and Saturday evenings, with the King's presence assured to us irrespective of weather conditions. Souls are being saved, but we are still praying God to save them by hundreds. Let us bend to the ministry of intercession with renewed consecration.

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## The Church Calendar

**Sunday.** For the week beginning Sunday, January 21st, 1923.

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, 7.45, Prayer followed by the third Bible Lecture by the Pastor, on "How to Study the Bible."

Wednesday—Junior Service, 7.15.

Thursday and Saturday, 8 o'clock, Meeting for Prayer

The Parliament Street Branch, 250 Parliament Street. Sunday: Bible School, 3.00.

Evangelistic Service, conducted by W. L. McKay.

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