

The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED WEEKLY.

IN THE INTEREST OF EVANGELICAL TRUTH, BY JARVIS STREET BAPTIST CHURCH, TORONTO, CAN., AND SENT FOR \$2.00 PER YEAR (UNDER COST), POSTPAID, TO ANY ADDRESS, 5c. PER SINGLE COPY

T. T. SHIELDS, *Pastor and Editor.*

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

Address correspondence: The Gospel Witness, 130 Gerrard Street E., Toronto.

Vol 3

TORONTO, DECEMBER 11th, 1924.

No. 31

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"THE USE A YOUNG MAN MADE OF HIS FORTUNE."

(The Third Sermon in a Series on "The Adventures of a Modern Young Man")

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Massey Music Hall, Toronto, Sunday Evening, December 7th, 1924.
(Stenographically reported)

"And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living."—Luke 15: 13.



WE are not to understand this parable as giving us merely the story of a few men who fathom the lowest depths of iniquity, who do literally squander all they have in the pursuit of sensuous pleasures. It is really the story of every man. We differ from each other only in degree;—in principle, we are all one, in that we have claimed our own independence; we have demanded the portion of goods that was ours, in order that we might be our own masters—as we thought. And we all have committed the folly of this young man who "gathered all together"—leaving nothing that belonged to him in his father's house; leaving himself without excuse, without any reasonable justification for ever returning again—all that belonged to him he gathered together and took it with him into a far country—just as we all have done; using all our powers of body and mind, not in the service of God, but apart from Him,—unless, indeed, we have been reclaimed and restored by divine grace. Do not look upon the man in the gutter and say he is the only prodigal. The very respectable man who never did anything to bring the blush of shame to his cheek, or to cause his friends to apologize for his conduct,—in his relationship to God he also is a prodigal; he has used his portion of goods to put as great a distance as possible between himself and God.

I.

And our text this evening tells us what use he made of his liberty, what use he made of his fortune, how he employed his wealth; and it is illustrative of the use men make of these things when left to themselves, without divine

grace, without the illumination and inspiration of the Spirit of God. It is an illustration of the life men naturally live there—in the far country. He “wasted his substance with riotous living”; which, being interpreted, means that he spent his resources as though they were without limit. He was like a man the first day after pay-day; imagining himself to be possessed of unlimited funds, he lived the life of a spendthrift. That is what the word “riotous” means, that he spent freely, lavishly, without reserve, without judgment, without pausing to think that he would reach the end of his resources; and by and by he found himself without means. And that is a picture of how we have lived—all of us—until we have been brought to ourselves by the Spirit of God.

Here was a man who set no curb whatever upon his desire; like the man under the sun of whom I read to you this evening, whatever he desired he determined to possess: “Whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them. I withheld not my heart from any joy.” No price was too great for him to pay; it was enough for him to want a thing, for him to resolve to have it. While his money lasted, he spent as though there were no end to the supply. And that has been true of very many of us,—in principle, true of all of us—that we have put no boundary to our desires. There are many who say, “Why are these natural desires within me, if they are not meant to be gratified? Why am I so constructed as to desire certain things, if it be not lawful to indulge that desire?” It is perfectly natural for a man to want to eat; but any sensible man will set a limit to the indulgence of that desire. It is inevitable that we should want to drink. These appetites are natural to us. But even in the physical realm they must be controlled; they must be subject to some limitations; they may not be lightly and without restraint indulged. There is too great a price to pay. And yet there are those who have never stopped to consider, “Can I afford it? Have I resources enough to justify me in this expenditure, in order to the realization of my desire?”

That is true in the realm of the senses. We are made up of spirit, soul and body. And a man cannot, if he would, ignore the requirements of his physical nature. When our Lord Jesus was in the wilderness, we read that He hungered; and the Devil came to him and said, “If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.” Now, He had the power to do that; but had He yielded to the temptation, He would have gratified His physical appetite at too great a price. And He refused to exercise that supernatural power for the gratification of His bodily appetite, because He knew it would involve His spiritual impoverishment; and He said, “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. I have another part of My nature to satisfy beside the physical; and I cannot afford to do violence to My spiritual nature in order that My body may be fed.” And yet that is just the price men pay in order to the gratification of their physical nature, in order to indulge in various forms of sensuous pleasure; in order that they may revel in luxury, that they may surround themselves with all sorts of physical comforts. I am not speaking now of the absolutely illegitimate indulgences of the flesh; but of that which is legitimate up to a certain measure. But this man did not know how to set a bound to it. He spent his time in riotous, in prodigal living,—indulging himself to the utmost at all costs; violating the laws of his mind and the requirements of his physical nature, in order to the indulgence of merely carnal pleasures.

Then, there is another kind of pleasure—in the mental realm. There are some things which we may legitimately desire. As I said to you a night or

so ago, the powers of our mind were given us that they might be exercised. God does not expect us to accept anything blindly. He has made us rational creatures; He has made us responsible to Himself; He has divided unto us his living, endowing us with power to be exercised in legitimate pursuits. And it is well that our minds should thus be exercised. There is a kind of mental pleasure: there is a pleasure in finding things out; there is a pleasure in the acquirement of knowledge. You see it when a little boy comes home from school. A new door has been opened to him; he has got a glimpse of another realm. And, full of his new knowledge, he comes home to tell his father or his mother of the great discovery he has made. He rejoices in that he knows something to-day that he did not know yesterday. He is proud of the possession of a mental attainment that belongs to himself. And that is perfectly legitimate. It is right for us to ask questions; but we must set a bound even to our questioning.

There is a theory abroad to-day, which is not at all new, that it is a special mark of our belonging to this age, that we ask questions. I remember hearing a professor address a graduating class a few years ago, saying that the peculiar characteristic of this age was that it was an age of "quest". Talk to your old grand-mother—or your great grand-mother, if she is living—and ask her whether the children of her day belonged to an age of quest. They were always tearing open the pantry door, and breaking in here, and there, and everywhere. They were always inquiring. As a matter of fact, that has been characteristic of the human race from the beginning,—a thirst for knowledge! You remember back in the beginning, there was one door that was locked against man—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—and over that door was written, "No Admittance". But man was determined to possess that knowledge—and obtained it; but he obtained it at too great a price. It is the same old story of "riotous living", of prodigal expenditure of powers, in order to the possession of that upon which the heart is set.

Napoleon was an example of one whose prodigality belonged to the intellectual realm. Study the life of Napoleon, and you find that he was not a debauchee; he was not a licentious man; he was not a man given to the indulgence of appetite. He kept under his body. He never could have done what he did, if he had not. His dinner was a thing of necessity; he got through with it as quickly as possible. Whenever his officers were going to dine with him, they made a point of dining somewhere else first, because he never gave them time to enjoy their dinner. He appeared to need so little; he ate so rapidly, putting aside the requirements of the body as quickly as possible, in order that he might go on in the attempt to realize his passion for power. He lived in the mental realm. There is where his sin was, chiefly.

We remember the story of the Master's temptation—the typical, the representative Man, carried up into an exceeding high mountain and shown all the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them. How did they come before Him? I suppose that it was by the exercise of the imagination, the powers of the mind—just as you and I have created worlds that had no existence, in our own imaginations. All these things were brought before Him; and they were offered to Him at a price. But the price was too great for Him to pay. Even the Son of God said, "I cannot afford to pay that price for the kingdoms of this world, and their glory." Yet, my dear friends, there are men who pay just that price,—who bow down and worship the Devil himself, if only they may realize their ambitions. Why, there are men in this city ambitious to be wealthy—not for the love of money. I remember a man who told me once—he had acquired great wealth—and he said—it was before motor cars were as

common as they are to-day—he said, “When I stood out on my verandah, and I saw my car swing around, and those bright lights lighted up the place, I said to myself, ‘Can it be possible that I own that? There was a time when I never dreamed that that would be within my grasp.’”

You wonder why it is that, when a man has made a million dollars, he wants to make two; and when he has made two, he wants four—and eight. He wants to go on making money. You wonder why a man like Henry Ford does not retire? Well, if he were working for money he would. He has more than he can possibly use. That is not it at all! It is simply this, that men are consumed with a passion for power! And wealth gives them power. They appear to have everything; and yet they want a little more, and a little more, and a little more. They spend themselves in riotous and extravagant living, setting no bounds to their ambition, but going on—and on—and on, to see what they can get out of the far country.

That does not necessarily mean getting drunk, nor does it mean wearing a ragged coat. A man may be very abstemious and live in that intellectual realm, and there spend his portion. That is the truth of this lesson: that he set no limit to his desire; that there was no price too great to pay for its realization.

II.

Then the second thing: He received no return for his expenditure. He wasted his substance; he poured it out—and got nothing back. Substance does not mean his money, there. It means his being, his essence, what he was. He wasted himself in riotous living; he concentrated all his powers upon the effort to realize his desires. And when he had spent himself to the utmost, he had nothing to show, nothing that satisfied him; he wasted his portion of goods, and had nothing left. Now, that is true; that is how some men live; that is the fruit of sin.

The fact is, this young man found there was nothing in the far country of lasting value. It could not be bought for money. Whatever he laid his hands upon soon slipped through his fingers; and wherever he went he found nothing that would abide with him. And, my dear friends, that is the old story. There is not in all the city of Toronto, if you had all the money in all the banks, if you owned the whole city, if you had the freedom of all the stores, and you could buy all the clothes you want, and live in any kind of house you desire, and drive any sort of car, or even go in an aeroplane; if you were in the position of this man under the sun of whom I have read, and were able to heap to yourself men singers and women singers, and to have generations of servants in your house; and to lay out gardens with fountains playing therein; if you indulged yourself to the utmost, and even if you exceeded all those who lived in Toronto as this man exceeded in wealth the wealth of all who had been before him in Jerusalem—when you had obtained it all, you would have to make exactly the same acknowledgment that this man did: “There was no profit under the sun.” There are many wealthy homes in this city where that has been proved, where “their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish”; but they have discovered that “a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth”. There is no abiding satisfaction in the realm of the senses. To be carnally-minded, to live on the low plane of physical desire—good clothes, comfortable houses, plenty of food, the indulgence of every kind of physical desire—is only a passing thing. It does not last; it satisfies no one. How often we have seen it: men who have kept themselves back from nothing; only to discover that “all is vanity and vexation of spirit”. That is a commonplace. You have seen a man who has spent all his

money, who has come to the end of himself physically—"wasted his substance"—and he is a standing advertisement of the folly of it, because the folly of seeking satisfaction in that direction may so easily be seen.

But it is equally true, my friends, that there is no satisfaction for any of us though we indulge the powers of the mind. It is a passing pleasure; but it does not last. I called in to see a man in a certain American city one day; and I said to him, "Well, how are you to-day?" He said, "I am feeling very happy." I said, "I am glad to hear that. What has happened?" "Oh, I have just received a letter from my publisher, telling me that my latest book is selling like hot cakes. Read it!" And he threw it across his desk. It was a letter saying his book had received wide acceptance, and that another edition—I don't know whether a second or a third—was about to be issued to meet the demand. And he was very much gratified. Yet five years from now no one will know anything about his book. He will have no particular satisfaction in it then. These things are passing; they do not abide with us. We are heirs to the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of all the ages. We boast that we are cleverer than our predecessors—and of course we ought to be. We are very proud of ourselves. But I suppose every generation that has preceded us has been afflicted with the same smug complacency that belongs to us; but if there ever was a wiser generation than ours, certainly we are very unwilling to admit it.

And yet, with it all, there is something we have not discovered. The greatest scholar in the world, although he has all the lore of the world gathered about him; though he has the product of the minds of all the scholars on his shelves, when he feels a pain, and feels that something is wrong, his wealth and his knowledge are all of no avail. His doctor comes and he says, "There is something wrong with you"; and he examines him and adds, "I am afraid it is something we cannot deal with. We must call in another man of science." And another man of science comes in; and he examines him, and confirms the judgment of the first. We will suppose he has spent his time in amassing wealth. He has now power to command all the skill of the ablest men of his generation. And he brings them to his bedside. He is willing to give a million dollars for the extension, for the prolongation of his life; but with all his wealth, and all the wisdom that his wealth can command, he stands face to face with Someone who has no respect for the cleverness of this generation; who comes with his bony hands and his empty eye-sockets—comes upon that man of learning and wealth. And that man finds that the one thing that he has not learned is whither he is going.

Men are very much concerned to-day to find out where we came from. Well, that is interesting! I know where we came from. So does every one who reads this Book. But there are some people who are far more interested in origins than in destinations. The great question with them is where man came from: but the supreme question for every one of us is, Where are we going? Whether a man came from a worm, or something else, he is here; and he is not going to be here for ever. And all that he has been able to find in the far country, apart from God, will not prolong his life indefinitely. It may seem to postpone the advent of the last enemy; but he at last comes. And when his life is ended his friends stand about him, and say this: "With all the accumulated wisdom of the ages on his library shelves, we cannot find anyone, anywhere, to tell us where he has gone. He has 'wasted his substance with riotous living'; and at the end of it all he is bankrupt; he has not even enough to pay his fare to another world."

That is the story. Oh, my friends, come back to the old Gospel. Our Lord

Jesus has anticipated our folly. We wasted our substance: He conserved His; we spent all our powers "with riotous living": He spent His in laying up a store of merit sufficient to cover all our deficits; we have rendered ourselves utterly unworthy before God: He lived a perfect life. And that perfection flowed in solution when His blood was shed for the atonement of our sin. And though we have no right to return, though we have spent all and are in want, yet we may come, not on the basis of merit, but on the basis of His abounding grace. We may find re-entrance to our Father's house, restoration to His fellowship, and, indeed, to heirship: "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

Now, far more than I have said, you have thought this evening. Many a man here to-night has said, "Well, that is true; I have got nothing out of it. All is vanity and vexation of spirit. There is nothing that satisfies, nothing that will satisfy the heart and conscience in the far country." The only way to be satisfied is to get back home: "Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." Oh, shall we come back? If there is anyone who has wandered far, anyone who has "wasted his substance" in the sense of getting no return for all your investment in life, I promise you in the name of Jesus Christ that He will satisfy for time and for eternity.

We may not be alive next Sunday evening. Only this week I was called to lay a dear sister away. I had not known her intimately; but she had been to the services. She was suddenly called on Tuesday, and passed away Wednesday morning. Who knows but that our time may come? That is old-fashioned, is it not? That is old-fashioned for a preacher to say to anyone, "You had better prepare to meet your God, because you may not be living to-morrow." It is just as old-fashioned as this Book. The pity of it is that Death is not old-fashioned; he is very modern and up-to-date. He is on our track always. If you dare to take the risk of passing beyond without knowing Christ here, that is your responsibility. But mine is to urge you not to do so; but to accept the offers of mercy, to yield yourself to Christ as Saviour, to accept His atoning work for you, and to do it to-night.

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come."

GOOD NEWS FROM OAKWOOD CHURCH, TORONTO.

We count it a privilege to spread good news always. Mr. Mesley, the pastor of the Oakwood Ave. Church, Toronto, sends us news of blessing upon his work. For ten months a group of members have met three times a week to pray for revival. Bro. Mesley is kind enough to say that in this they were following the example of Jarvis St. This has resulted in much heart-searching and re-consecration to the service of the Lord. On November 23rd, the Lord sent Evangelist Adam Barr, the converted carter from Glasgow, to lead in special services. This came about without any human planning. From the first day conversions have taken place, and a deep sense of conviction of sin and concern for salvation is being manifested throughout the neighborhood. The building has been packed to overflowing on Sundays, and filled every week night. Many backsliders who have been long out of fellowship with God have been restored, and many sinners have been converted. The revival has been characterized by the conversion of many for whom special prayer has been made, while concern for the lost on the part of God's people is shown by the personal effort being made to bring the lost to Christ.

Brother Barr is evidently a true and mighty man of God. We were impressed with his strength from our first meeting with him, and we hope many other churches will seek his services.

The publication of this paper as a missionary enterprise is made possible by the gifts of members of Jarvis Street Church and others, and is sent to subscribers by mail for \$2.00 (under cost) per year. If any of the Lord's stewards who read this have received blessing, we shall be grateful for any thank-offering you may be able to send to The Witness Fund at any time; and especially for your prayers that the message of The Witness may be used by the Holy Spirit for the defence of the Faith, the salvation of souls, and the exaltation of Christ. As our funds make it possible, we hope to add to our free list, from time to time, the names of ministers at home and missionaries abroad.

EDITORIAL

TEXAS BAPTISTS AND DR. J. FRANK NORRIS.

True Baptist believers belong to one family wherever they are found. They are, indeed, members of one body, irrespective of national or geographical boundaries; and of them it is true that "whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it". The Southern Baptists are a great host; and of that great host, Texas Baptists are a most influential part. This is our apology for venturing an opinion relative to recent happenings in the Texas State Convention.

We have before us a copy of the *Baptist Standard*, published in Dallas, containing an article entitled, "A Triumphant Meeting of Texas Baptists", under the name of E. C. Routh, Editor. This report contains two outstanding items of interest. The first is a statement of belief, signed by all the members of the Faculty of Baylor University, Waco, Texas, issued to the Board of Trustees of the University, and read to the Convention at Dallas. The statement is one of the most admirable documents we have read. It leaves nothing to be desired. So far as any subscription to any statement of belief can be binding, the entire Faculty of Baylor University has solemnly bound itself to a programme of strictly orthodox teaching. Following this statement, we are informed that a document signed by twenty-five members of "co-operating Baptist Churches and regularly appointed messengers to the Convention" challenged the right of the messengers of the First Baptist Church, Fort Worth, to be seated in the Convention as messengers. The *Baptist Standard* report continues: "By a rising vote, and without discussion, the great Convention voted unanimously, so far as we could see, to approve the recommendation of the Credentials Committee that the challenge against the messengers of First Baptist Church be sustained".

So far as it is possible for one outside the Convention to do so, we have followed the Texas controversy with care and great interest. The pastor of the First Baptist Church, Dr. J. Frank Norris, has been waging war on the teaching of Evolution in Baylor University for upwards of three years. We have read *The Searchlight* carefully on these matters; and we have observed that Dr. Norris has displayed extraordinary ability in directing his fire at Evolution rather than evolutionists. While he has been fearless and uncompromising in his defense of the faith; and in his attacks upon that particular aspect of Modernism which aims at its destruction, he has kept the discussion on a very high plane, insisting upon holding his opponents to a consideration of the question of whether or not Evolution was being taught in Baylor University. The fact that several resignations were forced by Dr. Norris' exposures showed that his course was amply justified.

Some time ago, we believe it was at Galveston, the question was supposed to be settled by an announcement by the President of Baylor to the effect that

he was opposed to Evolution in any form. For some unaccountable reason, we missed a statement made, we believe, by the President of Baylor in one of the University's publications relative to the evolution controversy. We should have known nothing about it but for an editorial in the *Baptist Standard* by Dr. Routh, in which he said in effect that Dr. Norris was not the issue in the Texas controversy, but rather the question, 'Whether Evolution was being taught in Baylor? And he expressed regret that the war should have been re-opened by Baylor itself. We saw this editorial quoted in several papers and rejoiced that the principles for which Dr. Norris had contended had found a courageous and able champion in the editor of the official organ of Texas Baptists. Later we read that the editor of *The Standard* was to speak in the First Baptist Church, Fort Worth. We heard from many brethren conversant with affairs in the South that the bold utterance of Editor Routh was likely to cause him his position. A careful reading of the Editor's account of the meeting of Texas Baptists in Dallas will convince any candid mind that the Editor has now brought forth fruit meet for repentance.

Some time ago we read an account of the expulsion of one of the students of Baylor University for disloyalty to the Institution. The expulsion order was signed by the secretary of Baylor University. When we read an account of this, we confidently expected that the conscience of Texas Baptists would be aroused, and that there would be at least one other resignation from Baylor. On reading the statement of faith in the *Baptist Standard*, we were surprised to find one name still on the Faculty. Were we in Dr. Norris' place, we should be disposed to ask if every member of the Faculty of Baylor would be as willing to subscribe to the twentieth chapter of Exodus as to the Genesis account of creation.

Texas Baptists are undoubtedly a great people, and have great achievements to their credit. But great masses of people may sometimes more easily be swayed by their leaders than small numbers. We can well understand how the statement of the Baylor Faculty would move the Convention, especially if everything were properly staged for its presentation. We notice that the right of the messengers from the First Baptist Church to a seat in the Convention was challenged on the ground, among other things, of the opposition of their church to the "elected trusted leaders" of the Convention; and among the signatories to the challenge we observe the names of Dr. L. F. Scarborough and Dr. F. S. Groner. These names long represented to us some of the giants of Israel. We once made an earnest effort to persuade the President of the South Western Theological Seminary to honour Jarvis Street Church with a visit.

We went to Fort Worth by the invitation of Dr. W. B. Riley in May, 1923. Up to that time, we had never read *The Searchlight*, nor had we met Dr. Norris. What we knew of Dr. J. Frank Norris we had learned from the *Baptist Standard*, and that had been by no means complimentary. We went to Fort Worth rather afraid of the Pastor of the First Church. We were, indeed, warned by some of our most intimate friends that association with him would be sure to be injurious. On meeting Dr. Norris we had a feeling, first of all, that he was almost as much afraid of the Pastor of Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, as we were afraid of the Pastor of the First Church, Fort Worth. We sat through the Fundamentals Convention, giving the closest possible attention to everything that occurred. Our first knowledge of the spirit of some Texas Baptists came from that meeting. A Roman Catholic editor attended the meeting, and paid \$10.00 to the girl at the door as a contributing member of the Fundamentalists Association. As soon as it became known, the Convention

dealt with the matter in such a way as to make a repetition of the blunder impossible. We read an account of the affair in the Dallas and Fort Worth papers, and later, an account written by Dr. F. S. Groner. We knew nothing of him at the time; but the article was an absolute misrepresentation of the facts of the case, as we knew from personal observation. Later we had occasion to observe the spirit manifested by this brother and Dr. L. B. Scarborough and Dr. George W. Truett toward the pastor of the First Baptist Church, Fort Worth.

Very probably our friend Norris is sometimes very provoking. When he shoots he has a way of aiming at the bull's eye—and generally hits it. It is very difficult to turn him aside from his purpose: he has an uncomfortable habit of sticking to the point. Possibly he seldom makes the mistake of the king of Israel of smiting with his arrow only thrice instead of five or six times;—he is more likely to make it seven for good measure. We are not surprised, therefore, that his opponents should become at times almost exasperated. It may be very bad manners for a motorist to carry too bright a searchlight on his car; it may, indeed, be very dangerous to middle-of-the-rovers. But that is surely no justification for doing murder! We thought we knew a little about religious warfare ourselves; but we are happily strangers to the vindictiveness and venom which this controversy has engendered in some of the Texas leaders. If the gospel of the grace of God could produce no better spirit than has been manifested by some of the leaders of the Texas Baptists toward their opponents, the last reason for sending such a gospel to the heathen would have vanished. We have known hundreds of people who make no profession of religion at all, who would have been ashamed of such conduct.

In the Dallas Convention matter, Dr. Norris obviously made one serious mistake. He ought to have known better than to base his action upon a newspaper report of what had occurred at Dallas. On the other hand, inasmuch as his telegram to the Convention plainly stated that his action was determined by the press report of proceedings at Dallas, the telegram itself should rather have led the Convention to suspend action until Dr. Norris could be clearly informed. The Convention's strong and uncompromising repudiation of Evolution shows that had the Convention been misled in believing that one of its members had endorsed the principle of Evolution, it would have withdrawn from that member just as Dr. Norris withdrew from the Convention.

Further light is thrown upon this whole situation by the fact that the *Baptist Standard* fails even to mention that another telegram was received from Dr. Norris, which reads as follows:

“Judge O. S. Lattimore,
President Baptist General Convention,
Dallas, Texas.

If there is any further contest from the delegates from the First Baptist Church, I request that the hearing go over until Saturday, as I am here in Houston preaching to-day and to-night in services that can not be called off, but can arrive in the morning.”

This telegram reached the Convention, Dr. Norris contends, half a day before action was taken. Yet it would appear that the Convention was never apprised of the fact that such a message had been received. We have had experience enough in such matters to know that a great mass of people, such as composed the Dallas Convention, do not act without leadership; and no one who knows anything of the Texas situation, and who examines the list of signatories to the document challenging the right of the First Baptist Church, Fort Worth, to seats in the convention, would have much difficulty in identifying the fireman and engineer of the Texas steam-roller. When the Baptists of Texas have had time carefully to scrutinize the names signed to the Baylor statement; and to see the relation of that statement to the Convention's subsequent action in unseating the messengers from the First Baptist Church, there will be many troubled consciences in the Southland.

We remember travelling with one of the foremost Texas leaders when he boasted of the high standards maintained in the land of his birth, and of how

shocked he was in later years at the discovery that such standards were not universal. We are aware that in some states of the Union divorces are granted on trivial grounds; but we supposed that where divorce was granted on scriptural grounds, the attitude of the Baptist conscience everywhere would be the same. If Texas Baptists can read the *Baptist Standard's* account of the Dallas Convention without any movings of conscience, and that, in the face of one of the public records of one of the courts of the State, Baptists everywhere may well pray for a genuine revival of religion in Texas. Of course, the truth is, Texas Baptists do not yet realize the facts; for Texas Baptists are of as fine a type of Baptists as can be found anywhere in the world. And when they see the wrong that has been done, reaction will be inevitable! We have seen a Convention completely reverse its action in the space of two years; and we haven't the slightest doubt that the action of the Texas State Convention will similarly be reversed.

Those who have learned to love the pastor of the First Baptist Church, Fort Worth, need waste no sympathy on him. We have seen Baptist steam-rollers operate on more than one occasion; and we have observed that when such a machine endeavours to crush the ministerial life out of one of God's prophets, the machine invariably has to be laid up for repairs. Indeed, when an ecclesiastical steam-roller passes over one of God's preachers it renders him a bit of free valet service—he merely gets his clothes pressed for nothing; and stands on his feet again as though he had emerged from the proverbial handbox. We would recommend the Philistine giant not to carry too sharp a sword when he goes out to battle against the stripling with a sling and stone: it may be put to other uses than he intends. The gallows fifty cubits high is always more dangerous to Haman than to Mordecai; invariably Haman gets the rope and Mordecai the golden chain.

Our good friend, Dr. Norris, is in the true apostolic succession. He doesn't get many roses, but plenty of stones. Honesty compels us to admit that he is a trouble-maker: he makes trouble wherever he goes. The Devil seems to be quite disturbed when he hears that Norris is coming to town. He left a "peck of trouble" behind him in Jarvis Street,—the trouble being that we have nowhere to put the people that have thronged our Bible School ever since he was here. He has put us to a great deal of expense—in providing room for the hundreds of people who gather together weekly with a passion for the Word of the Lord. His visit to Toronto will be remembered for many a day; and through all eternity there will be hundreds who will praise the Lord for the saving message they heard at his lips.

We feel like standing by Dr. Norris because the Lord stands by him. Since our first meeting as strangers at Fort Worth, in May, 1923, we have had many hours of very intimate fellowship together; but we have yet to hear him speak one unkind word of any living man, either privately or publicly. We have an invitation from him to visit Fort Worth in the not distant future. We are disposed in this public way to accept it; and, if we go, we should like to preach on this subject, "The Preacher Who Refused to Stay Dead", and this will be our text: "And there came hither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city." We believe we could preach on that text this minute; but we pass it on as a suggestion to Brother Norris. We have no doubt he could preach an admirable sermon from that text himself; and we should not be surprised if he steals a march on us and preaches on this subject before we can get to Fort Worth. No one can learn to preach from such a text in any theological seminary in the land: qualification for that kind of preaching can be gained only in actual warfare.

We sympathize with Texas Baptists. J. Frank Norris is a great problem,—almost as great a problem as Elijah was to the heterodoxy of Ahab and the velvet-slipped, compromising, orthodoxy of Jehoshaphat. But the cancer of malice and hatred will not be removed from the corporate life of Texas Baptists by passing resolutions and unseating messengers of a particular church. It will still gnaw its way to the vitals of the Denomination: its agony will be felt in the treasurer's office; and its wasting effect will inevitably appear in diminishing spiritual fruitfulness.

We are informed that a prominent Texas layman, once Chairman of the

Board of Deacons of one of the most prominent churches in Texas, and three times President of the State Convention, resigned from all Boards, giving as his reason that "disaster is certain". The extraordinary action of Baylor University in refusing a hearing to the student who had testified against the wrong teaching in Baylor, and who was expelled from the University in consequence, is but a further illustration of the trend of the times in general, and of the spirit engendered by this controversy in particular.

Baptists everywhere will learn a lesson from the Texas situation. Those who would contend for the faith must be prepared to face the same spirit that kindled the fires of Smithfield. It is folly to think that the battle for the Book can be fought with as little hazard as is involved in playing a game of skittles. Contending for the faith means war—red, cruel, deadly, war! We are coming to a time when we shall read our New Testament with a clearer understanding, and with a deeper appreciation of what is involved in such a passage as this: "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."

The pity of it all is that in these controversies while those who, in their hearts, believe the Word of the Lord, are overwhelmingly in the majority, only a few have discernment to recognize the malignancy of the heresies which assail us; and, hoping to placate and thus to avoid conflict, they take up arms against those who, with a fuller appreciation of the danger which threatens, contend earnestly "for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints". Nothing but a great spiritual revival can save us and reunite the forces of Evangelical Christendom, and send them forth to present a solid front to the enemies of the truth. Meanwhile, as we contemplate the strange course of certain Evangelical leaders in general, and Texas leaders in particular, we can only exclaim: "How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed! the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street. The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter! * * * The daughter of my people is become cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness"—"How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! * * * How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished."

The Whole Bible Sunday School Lesson Course

Lesson LXIV.

December 21st, 1924.

MANASSEH AND JOSIAH.—II. Kings: 21-23.

Our lesson gives us two interesting characters: A king who sinned but repented and turned to God; and a king who led his people in a great revival.

I. Manasseh a Monument to Divine Mercy.

1. Manasseh the sinner. What a melancholy tale is the record of human life! "They have all gone aside". Manasseh copied the abominations of the heathen, just as young men seek to keep up with their elders, as other follow the giddy crowd in the city, or as the man who began life humbly, when he acquires wealth apes all who have become wealthy before him. What simpletons men are! He undid his father's reforms—every age needs its reformers; for there are never wanting those who build again the evils which others have destroyed. (vs. 2-3). He worshipped the creature (v. 3), rather than the Creator, and desecrated the temple (v. 4), and resorted to familiar spirits and set up a graven image in the house of the Lord (v. 7), and brought upon himself the anger of the Lord. (vs. 10-16). An examination of this list of transgressions of Manasseh will reveal the germ of practically every evil of which man is capable. He is an example of the man who breaks not one commandment, but the whole ten. If God could do anything for him none need despair. 2. Manasseh the penitent. (II Chron. 33: 11-16). In affliction he sought the Lord by humbling himself, and by prayer, God heard him and delivered him out of his captivity. "Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he

is God". Then he served the Lord with the same zeal he had showed in ways of evil. (II Chron. 33: 14-20).

II. Josiah the Royal Revivalist.

1. Josiah sought the Lord when very young. A mighty argument for child conversion.

2. Interested himself in the house of the Lord and in public worship. A further argument for the early formation of habits of reverence and worship.

3. By the inspiration of Josiah's command, the lost and forgotten book of the law was found in the house of the Lord. How many there are who need to rediscover their lost and forgotten Bibles!

4. A strange place for the book of the law to be lost,—the house of the Lord! But is it not lost in a similar way to-day? Many a temple dedicated to the worship of God, is a house without the Book. Little is said of the material repairs to the temple. The revival began with the finding of the Book. So the re-discovery of the law is more important than the collection still. We do well to pray that the churches of Christ may recover the Book.

5. The reading of the Book without any human interpreter wrought conviction of sin and contrition of heart. It always does. What a proof of divine inspiration of the Book of the Law is here! Scarce knowing what it was, they who read it found it sharper than any two-edged sword. God's Word can take care of itself and will by its own inherent qualities demonstrate its divine character.

6. The finding of the Book brought the king and the people to prayer. Give the people the Word of God and they will always resort to prayer.

7. They were convinced of the certainty of judgment. That is always an element in true repentance.

8. Yet mercy was promised on account of Josiah's humbling himself before the Lord. In the midst of wrath the Lord always remembers mercy.

III. How Josiah Promoted a National Revival.

1. He magnified the Word of the Lord (ch. 23: 1-2). A genuine revival comes from God, and is always accompanied by a new interest in the Word of God. Let anyone who feels his heart growing cold diligently attend to the divine word, and a revival will inevitably follow.

2. He put away all the idols out of the land, and destroyed every semblance of false religion (vs. 3-4). Thus must we pray,

"Break down every idol,
Cast out every foe;
Now wash me and I
Shall be whiter than snow."

3. He kept all the ordinances of God's house, notably the Feast of the Passover; and taught the people to be obedient to all that was written in the Book of the Covenant.

4. Thus Josiah exceeded all his predecessors in his zeal for the Lord. There is always room at the top. Mighty as men have been, by divine grace we may be yet mightier; holy as men have been made by the power of the Holy Ghost, there are higher heights which we may scale.

NOTES.

Last Sunday morning 27 received the hand of fellowship and four were baptized, making 75 additions to the church since October 1, including 62 baptisms. The attendance at Bible School was 1055.

NEXT SUNDAY EVENING SERVICE

will be held in Jarvis St. Church instead of in Massey Hall, beginning at 7 o'clock.