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Roman Bishop Broadcasts on Free Time CBC GIVES CHOICE TV HOUR

At a choice time on Saturday night the television audience of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation can view the program of Bishop Fulton J. Sheen. Bishop Sheen is a prominent radio and television speaker of the Roman Catholic Church; in addition he is the author of numerous books and pamphlets. Hence he takes a conspicuous part in the overall propaganda program carried on by the Church of Rome.

We are told that the Bishop is an able speaker and that his rating is very high in the United States. Even some of the Hollywood-sponsored extravaganzas rank behind him in popularity. One is not surprised then to observe that the Roman Church was very anxious to have his program on Canada's relatively new television network. In the United States the program is sponsored by a commercial advertiser but that is impossible in Canada. The C.B.C. has ruled that no religious program can be sponsored by a commercial organization; indeed no religious television time can be purchased from the C.B.C. Therefore it appeared that Bishop Sheen's program was not to be televised in Canada.

How then was the obstacle overcome? Very simply. *Bishop Sheen was given free time on the publicly-owned Canadian Broadcasting Corporation!* Further, he was given a choice time on Saturday evening. Who is to pay for this broadcast? The Roman Church? *No, you are going to pay to have this propagandist dispense his sugar-coated pills of Romanism to a large audience.*

We have heard some declare that Bishop Sheen did not present the peculiar tenets of Rome but rather presented a gospel that was acceptable to all and was devoid of any of the peculiarities usually associated with the Roman

Catholic Church. Since the man is a Bishop of the Roman Church, it is obvious that he is the servant of the Church and his great aim is to win people to the Church. In so doing, he apparently has managed to display an air of sweetness and light so that some unwary souls see no teeth in his message. Rest assured, however, that he is the servant of Rome and has simply adopted a soft approach in order to persuade Protestants that Rome is not so bad as she has been depicted. In this issue of THE GOSPEL WITNESS (See page 6, "Truth Is Stranger Than Fiction") we have quoted parts of radio sermons by Bishop Sheen which show that he presents the same shocking anti-Christian, unscriptural message as does the Church of Rome as a whole.

Not for one moment do we advocate that he should be denied freedom of expression; on the contrary, it is his privilege to spread his message by print, radio or television *if he or the Roman Church pays the bill.* But why should the taxpayers of Canada be asked to pay for the broadcast over a publicly-owned network?

Often we hear the boast that the C.B.C. is owned by all the people of Canada. If this is so, then why do all the people have to have a religious diet served up on the one hand by spineless, bankrupt modernists and on the other hand by the Roman Church. The whole principle of giving free time on a public network to any group is a wrong one and should not be tolerated any longer. If these groups will pay their broadcasting bill, then no one could reasonably object to their being given time. Meanwhile, here is one taxpayer who protests being placed in the position of helping to finance the broadcasts of a Roman Catholic bishop!—L.K.T.

CHRIST'S INDUSTRY

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

—John 5:17

The spirit of Christ was *the spirit of work*. There was not a lazy moment in all His life. Whether he was talking to the fishermen on the beach, or preaching to the sailors on the deck, or addressing the rustics amid the mountains, or spending the summer evenings in the village, He was always busy. Hewing in the carpenter's shop. Helping the lame man to walk without any crutch. Curing the child's fits. Providing rations for a hungry host. Always busy, He was. The hardy men that pulled out the net from Gennesaret, full of floundering treasures; the shepherds who hunted up the grassy plots for their flocks to nibble at; the shipwright thumping away in the dock-yards; the winemakers of En-gedi dipping up the juice from the vat and pouring it into the goat-skins—none were half so busy as He whose hands and head and heart were all full of the world's work. From the day on which He stepped out from the caravansery of Bethlehem to the day when he set His cross in the socket on the bloody mount, it was work, work, work, all the way. It is not so with us, not so with you, not so with me. We want the burden to be light if we are to carry it, the church pew soft if we are to sit in it, the work easy if we are to perform it, the sphere brilliant if we are to move in it, the religious service short if we are to survive it. On the way to heaven, rock us, fan us, sing us to sleep, dangle us on the tips of your fingers, hand us up out of this dusty world towards heaven on kid gloves and under a silken sunshade! Let the martyrs who waded the flood and breasted the fire get out of the way while this colony of tender footed Christians come up to get their crown! Oh, for more of that spirit which starts a man heavenward, determined to get there himself and take everybody else with him! Busy in the private circle, busy in the Sabbath-school, busy in the Church, busy everywhere for God and Christ and Heaven. O Christian soul, what has Jesus done against thee that thou canst afford to despise the awards of the faithful? At this moment, when all the armies of earth and heaven and hell are plunging into the conflict, how can you desert the standard.

—T. DEWITT TALMAGE

From Our Files

Due to lack of space, "From Our Files" was not printed in last week's issue of THE GOSPEL WITNESS. So many of our readers look for the little column that we print last week's here below:—

Thirty years ago, THE GOSPEL WITNESS, January 15, 1925 — This issue of THE GOSPEL WITNESS contains a penetrating article on one of the great questions of 1925—organic union of the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational churches. In concluding the article, the Editor wrote—"On every ground, therefore, it would appear that we have come to a day when Baptist testimony will be more than ever needed. We question whether Baptists ever had such an opportunity as that which confronts them today. What answer will Baptists make to the demand of the present situation? Are we to tone down the principles which have been vindicated in a thousand battles for the truth? Are we to compromise

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

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with error? People are hungering for the Bread of Life: there is a famine of hearing the Word of the Lord. We are persuaded that if Baptists will stand on the old principles and fearlessly proclaim the gospel of salvation through the blood, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and on the authority of a divinely inspired Bible, we may easily become God's instruments to lighten the present darkness, and to restore the religious world to some sort of moral sanity.

Wherever, whether in Ontario or in the West, the union of these denominations is consummated, the need of Baptist testimony will acquire a new urgency. We venture to suggest that Baptists everywhere should face the present crisis with a new consecration of all our powers to the service of Christ; and that we should proclaim with a new courage and with greater emphasis, the great principles for which our Baptist fathers contended, and for which some of them bled and died."

—Concerning the services of that week THE GOSPEL WITNESS simply says—"At the two services, about thirty came forward in response to the invitation."

Thirty Years Ago, THE GOSPEL WITNESS, January 22, 1925 — Great days had come upon the church which had passed through the fires of affliction. The report of the Sunday services was a short, crisp communique — "The attendance at Bible School last Sunday morning was nine hundred and twenty-seven, including three hundred and seventeen in the Pastor's class. At the morning service, there was a great congregation which almost filled the entire church. Several responded to the invitation. In the evening the church was packed to the utmost capacity, with many standing. Thirteen responded to the invitation, among them, one complete family — father and mother and daughter. Fifteen were baptized on Sunday and five on Tuesday evening. A large number will be baptized Sunday evening, February 1st."

—L.K.T.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

Adopted Children Made Heirs

A Sermon by the Pastor, Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, February 4th, 1934.

(Stenographically Reported)

(This sermon is taken from our files of hitherto unprinted sermons, and is printed verbatim as delivered. Dr. Shields has had no opportunity either to see or revise it since its delivery.)

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

"To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba; Father.

"Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."—Gal. 4:4-7.

THE word of God plainly teaches that those who believe become members of the divine family; they become children of God. Salvation consists not in becoming a church member, though that has its place; but in becoming, in a very real sense, a child of God. This morning I shall try to tell you how we become the children of God.

The text says that we are redeemed, that we might receive the adoption of sons; and because we are sons God puts His Spirit in our hearts, that henceforth we are no more servants, but sons, and being sons we become heirs of God through Christ. How, then, are we first of all to obtain the standing of sons? How are we, who are sinners, to appear before God, not as strangers, not as aliens, but as His sons? That is the standing we are given by divine grace — not even servants, but children of God.

I.

LET IT BE REMEMBERED, FIRST OF ALL, THAT WE ARE NOT THE CHILDREN OF GOD BY NATURE. Very frequently you read articles in which God is spoken of as a universal Father, and we hear a great deal about the universal brotherhood of man, and the universal Fatherhood of God. I must say that for myself I have not seen much evidence of brotherhood among men; and the scripture does not teach that all men are, by nature, the children of God. "God is a Spirit"; "that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit". We read this morning, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." Not all the seed of Abraham are called children: Not they that are of the flesh are children, but the children of the promise, the scripture says, are counted for the seed. By nature we are something other than the children of God; no matter how good you may be outwardly in appearance, we have not by nature the privilege of sonship. Our Lord said to certain people, "Ye are of your father the devil", and those very people said, "We be Abraham's seed, to whom the promises were made." I wish some of our friends could remember that to the very men who were, after the flesh the children of Abraham, our Lord said, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."

We are not naturally the children of God, but the children of the evil one: "But as many as receive him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." We become the children of God as we are born again, by His Spirit.

II.

BUT THE TEXT TELLS US THAT WE ARE REDEEMED IN ORDER THAT WE MIGHT BE ADOPTED: "To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Moses was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter. He was not her son after the flesh; but she adopted him, and gave him the status of a son. There is a sense in which he was under the law, for all the male children of the Hebrews were under Pharaoh's decree: they were to be slain. It was at this time Moses was born, and his little life was in danger of being snuffed out. But Pharaoh's daughter saw him in the ark of bulrushes, and adopted him as her own, interposed between him and the law, and saved him from death. That is not an exact illustration for Moses' daughter paid no price of redemption. But this text says that "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law".

Many people have come to me asking me to sign certain forms when they desired to apply to some children's society for the adoption of one of the children, certifying as to their character. But I think when people set out to adopt a little boy or a little girl, if they could be sure of it they would like to adopt one with pure blood, a child who came of a good family, if possible. I have seldom heard of anyone's going to a reformatory, or to a penitentiary, and saying, "I want the worst boy in the institution, and I will pay whatever price may be necessary in order to redeem him from this institution, and take him into my family as my son."

You can never find an exact illustration of the ways of God for the simple and sufficient reason that God is God, and there is nobody like Him. Nothing that men ever did fully illustrates the ways of God, for "as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." But

that is what our Lord did: He came to bear the penalty which they had incurred who were under the law, not merely that He might open the prison door and set them free, but that He might take them into His own family, and adopt them as His children. And this the Lord has done. We are adopted into the divine family, and by adoption we are given the standing of sons.

But we are not adopted as was Moses. When Pharaoh's daughter saw Moses, she observed that he was fair. It is said that Mordecai brought up Hadassah, or Esther; that he adopted her as his own child, because she was both fair and beautiful. But that is not why we were adopted, because we were neither fair nor beautiful. But we, compared with divine standards, were ugly in the extreme. I have seen some rather nice looking boys and girls who were nice looking *sometimes*. I do not know why it should have been done, but one of our papers recently had a sort of competition offering twenty-five dollars, or something like that, to the ugliest man. Faces were made very very ugly. Most of them were ugly enough without accentuating it. But I wonder what some of you would look like, what any of us would look like if it were possible to take a photograph of our tempers. I have seen a pretty little girl who had a temper like a little imp, have not you? I have seen a beautiful face made positively ugly by an evil temper, a boy who was outwardly attractive, when he was angry and out of sorts, and did not like his dinner, or something of the sort, how ugly he could become even in appearance; but uglier far was his spirit.

Now God does not look on the outward appearance at all: He looks on the heart, and He sees us for what we are. I remember a man who used to be on the Sherbourne car some years ago. He was a comparatively young man at that time, and he was always whistling, collecting fares and whistling as he did so. And I noticed that his mouth had been so — what shall I call it? What would you call it? — puckered up to whistle that when he ceased whistling to speak, his mouth seemed like an old man's. I don't know what he would be like when he got to be sixty or seventy.

There are some people who make seams in their faces, always frowning. I have seen a dyspeptic advertise his dyspepsia, just looking out of sorts, as though he had had vinegar instead of tea or coffee for breakfast, and he had not lost the taste of it. We all do much to write our dispositions on our countenances, and advertise to people the sort of people we are in spirit. But remember the God Who chose us for Himself, and adopted us, saw us, not as we are on our best behaviour when somebody comes, and we borrow a smile from somewhere — few of us have the smile that won't come off. Brother Tye has one, and one or two others here; but most people cease smiling sometimes, and frown instead. But the Lord sees us in all our native ugliness, and yet has adopted us. Is not that a marvellous thing? adopted us into His family, and given us a place as His sons.

III.

AND IT IS NOT ENOUGH THAT WE SHOULD BE ADOPTED AS SONS: WE MUST HAVE THE NATURE OF SONS, and so the text says that He redeemed us in order that He might adopt us, and having adopted us, He put His Spirit in our hearts, teaching us to say, "Abba, Father."

It is rather a risky thing adopting a child, is it not? Blood will sometimes show itself. The child may be quite

attractive in infancy, but oh, how bitterly disappointed foster parents have been when the children have grown up, and the nature which they could not see, has begun to manifest itself. When Pharaoh's daughter looked upon Moses she said, "This is one of the Hebrew's children. I shall adopt him. I shall take him home." And she did; but she could not make an Egyptian of him, for when Moses was come to years the nature that was in him asserted itself, and he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter". He said, "I am an Hebrew, and I will go with my own people."

That is the danger always, and if God had adopted us to be His children without giving us the nature of children, what should we become? Mr. Spurgeon once said, when he was a very young man that if a pickpocket, without being regenerated, having his nature changed, could get to heaven, he would pick the angels' pockets after he got to heaven. That was rather a striking thing, was it not? a half-humorous saying. A very great brother came to him after and said, "Mr. Spurgeon you were wrong this morning." "In what respect?" "Well," said the great man, "the angels have no pockets." Mr. Spurgeon replied, "I did not know that. I have not been there. I will change the figure, brother, and say that he would pluck the feathers out of the angels' wings." What he meant was that it was no use for men to go to heaven unless first of all they had been given a heavenly nature.

The Lord not only adopts us, but He puts His Spirit in our hearts, and we are born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God": "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

When we are saved we are not only given the standing of children, but we are given the nature of children, and God puts His Spirit in our hearts so that by a divine instinct we are able to call God our Father. I suppose little children are taught to say "father", and "mother", and yet I suppose father and mother hardly know how they taught them. They hear father call mother, Mother, and mother call father, Father. And by and by they say it because it is almost instinctive. Perhaps the first word a child utters is "Daddy" or "Mama", or whatever it may be.

Now God has sent His Spirit into our hearts so that it becomes natural for us, because His nature is in us, to call God our Father. And what a difference there is between the son and the servant! We are no longer servants but sons in the Father's house, and we have the natures of children.

That being so, in due time we shall bear the image of our Father. It is because His life is in us, not because we labour to approximate some idea, not because we laboriously endeavour to do this and the other thing. We ought to do that which is right. But because God, by His Spirit, has changed our natures, and given us His own nature, as that develops we shall be conformed to the image of His Son.

I have seen many young men of whom I have said, as a father was going to introduce his son and say, "This is my son", "I know who he is. He is the image of you." When we get to heaven we shall not need anyone to introduce us. The angels will know that we are children of God because as we have borne the image of the earthy, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly by

and by, and we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is.

IV.

NOW THAT MEANS THAT HAVING THE NATURE OF CHILDREN, BEING HIS CHILDREN, WE SHARE ALL THE WEALTH OF OUR FATHER. Being children, we are made heirs through Christ, and we are remembered in His will. He has made Jesus Christ heir of all things, and we are joint heirs with Him, so that everything that belongs to Him belongs to us. I am going to own the earth some day, Toronto, and New York, and London, the earth and the heavens too for that matter! They are all His, and He says, "All that is Mine is yours. I am going to share it with you."

"Joint-heirs with Christ"! It is a great thing to be a Christian, a child of God, and an heir of glory. Esther was adopted, and by and by she married; she became the consort of the king, and she was in the king's palace, and sat at his table. But Mordecai sent her word one day, a solemn message, when he told her about the sentence of death that had been passed upon all the Jews. Haman you know, was a kind of ancient Hitler, who passed sentence upon all the Jews. It is no new thing. And Mordecai said, "Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews." You are a child of wrath like all the rest of us, and they will know you are in the king's palace, and if that sentence falls, it will find you even in the king's palace. Not so with us. We are the children of God, heirs of God, we have His life in us, not merely a legal adoption, but we are made one with Him forever. Our life is coterminus with His—No; it is not. That is a poor word; it has no termination. He says, "Because I live, ye shall live also". So we are saved for time and for eternity, being adopted into the royal family. How does it come about? Just by receiving Jesus, just by trusting Him, nothing less.

Will you trust Him this morning?

"I am so glad that our Father in Heaven."

GOD NOT DEAD

At one time I was sorely vexed and tried by my own sinfulness, by the wickedness of the world, and by the dangers which beset the Church. One morning I saw my wife dressed in mourning. Surprised, I asked her who had died. She replied: "Do you not know? God in Heaven is dead." I said to her: "How can you talk such nonsense, Katie? How can God die? He is immortal, and will live through all eternity." "Is that really true?" she asked. "Of course," I said, still not perceiving what she was aiming at, "how can you doubt it? As surely as there is a God in Heaven, so sure is it that He can ever die." "And yet," she said, "though you do not doubt that, you are still so hopeless and discouraged." Then I observed what a wise woman my wife was, and mastered my sadness.

—MARTIN LUTHER

SUNDAY IN JARVIS STREET

After a good prayer meeting on Saturday night, the services of Sunday could only be a blessing. Mr. Cole preached in the morning when two responded to the invitation. In the evening a large congregation gathered to hear Mr. Slade preach on "A Plot That Failed". Once more blessing was felt.

—L.K.T.

GO AND TELL JESUS

"And they went and told Jesus."—Matt. xiv. 12.

I COMMEND the behaviour of the disciples to all those who are abused and slandered and persecuted. When Herod put John to death, the disciples knew that their own heads were not safe. And do you know that every John has a Herod? There are persons in life who do not wish you very well. Your misfortunes are honeycombs to them. Through their teeth they hiss at you, misinterpret your motives, and would be glad to see you upset. No man gets through life without having a pommelling. Some slander comes after you, horned and tusked and hoofed, to gore and trample you; and what are you to do? I tell you plainly that all who serve Christ must suffer persecution. It is the worst sign in the world for you to be able to say: "I haven't an enemy in the world." A woe is pronounced in the Bible against the one of whom everybody speaks well. If you are at peace with all the world, and everybody likes you and approves your work, it is because you are an idler in the Lord's vineyard, and are not doing your duty. All those who have served Christ, however eminent, have been maltreated at some stage of their experience. You know it was so in the time of George Whitfield, when he stood and invited men into the kingdom of God. What did the learned Doctor Johnson say of him? He pronounced him a miserable mountebank. How was it when Robert Hall stood and spoke as no uninspired man ever did speak of the glories of heaven? and as he stood Sabbath after Sabbath preaching of these themes his face kindled with the glory. John Foster, a Christian man, said of this man: "Robert Hall is only acting, and the smile on his face is a reflection of his own vanity." John Wesley turned all England upside down with Christian reform, and yet the punsters were after him, and the meanest jokes in England were perpetrated about John Wesley. What is true of the pulpit is true of the pew; it is true of the street, it is true of the shop and the store. All who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution. And I set it down as the very worst sign in all your Christian experience, if you are, any of you, at peace with all the world. The religion of Christ is at war! It is a challenge to "the world, the flesh, and the devil", and if you will buckle on the whole armour of God, you will find a great host disputing your path between this and heaven. But what are you to do when you are assaulted and slandered and abused, as I suppose nearly all of you have been in your life? Go out and hunt up the slanderer? Oh, no, silly man. While you are explaining away a falsehood in one place, fifty people will just have heard it in other places. I counsel you to another course. While you are not to omit any opportunity of setting yourselves right, I want to tell you of One who had the hardest things said about Him, whose sobriety was disputed, whose mission was scouted, whose companionship was denounced, who was pursued as a babe, and spit upon as a man, who was howled at after He was dead. I will have you go unto Him with your bruised soul, and He will sympathize, and He will help. Go and tell Jesus.

—T. DEWITT TALMAGE

The Bible is a window in this prison-world through which we may look into eternity.—TIMOTHY DWIGHT.

Never despair of a child. The one you weep the most for at the mercy-seat may fill your heart with sweetest joys.—T. L. CUYLER.

"You Hear Strange Things About Catholics"

TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN FICTION

THE newspapers and magazines have for some time carried conspicuous ads inserted by the Knights of Columbus, a militant priest-inspired layman's organization of the Roman Catholic Church. These ads are headed by the caption, "You Hear Strange Things About Catholics". The implication is that Roman Catholics are the innocent victims of a sinister and scandalous whispering campaign which absolutely distorts the "pure" teaching of the Church upon certain cardinal points.

After dealing with the straw dummy which the creators of the ad have usually themselves constructed, the ad paints a lovely picture of the "harmless", reasonable and good teaching of Rome and invites inquirers to write for further information. We have been informed that this newspaper campaign has been highly successful and that thousands have enrolled for the instruction course and many have proceeded to join the Church of Rome.

We are quite aware of the fact that false and fantastic stories have been circulated about our Roman Catholic friends and no self-respecting person should have any part in furthering the circulation of falsehood. But we are keenly aware of the fact that many *strange but true* stories have been told and amply verified concerning the teachings and the black record of the Roman Church. No amount of cheap pamphleteering by the Knights of Columbus or anyone else can dismiss facts.

The Truth About Rome Is Indeed "Strange"!

No fiction could possibly be so strange as some of the teachings of the inventive priests of Rome. Between the Bible and most of her pronouncements there is absolutely no similarity. Indeed, the visitor from another world could hardly recognize her message as being "Christian". In seeking to give our readers some indication of these "strange" pronouncements we shall limit ourselves to one Roman authority's utterances upon one subject. The authority is Bishop Fulton J. Sheen who now has been given free time on the C.B.C. television network. We could choose many of his strange declarations on the subject of the Virgin Mary but we shall present only a few all of which, with one exception, are found in his book, "The World's First Love".

Mary — The Subject of God's Dreams

The very dedication of the book is shocking, strange and blasphemous. It reads, in part as follows:

DEDICATED TO
THE WOMAN I LOVE

* * *

The Woman Whom even God Dreamed of Before the World Was Made;

If someone whispered to you that a Roman priest had ever uttered such blasphemy and nonsense, you would hardly believe it. "You hear strange things about Catholics" and most are true but the strangest have never been told!

Heaven Divided Against Itself

Recently a good reader in the province of Quebec drew

a strange statement of Bishop Sheen to our attention. This statement is quoted in *The Convert* (a monthly magazine published by a former priest, Joseph Zacchello). The author of the article, Rev. Richard P. De Armev quotes Bishop Sheen as having told the following story.

"May I give encouragement to all frustrated, anxious, fearful souls by this story about the Queen of Mercy. It seems that one day our Lord was walking through the Kingdom of Heaven and saw some souls that apparently had entered very easily. He went to Peter and said, 'Peter, I have given you the Keys to the Kingdom of Heaven. I want you to use that power wisely and judiciously. Tell me, Peter, how did these souls gain entry to My Kingdom?' Peter answered, 'Don't blame me, Lord! Every time I close the door, Your mother opens a window!'"

Strange is surely a mild word to apply to such a story! It is unbiblical, Christ-dishonouring and blasphemous. Indeed vocabulary is exhausted as one seeks to describe it. Surely the truth about Rome's teachings is stranger than any fiction. We do not wonder that Bishop Sheen's popularity rating on television is greater than that of many comedians for the ordinary performer would not dare tell such a tall story as truth or even illustrative of truth.

A New Missionary Approach!

We have always laboured under what Rome apparently regards as a delusion for we have thought that the prime necessity in missionary work was to preach Christ. Bishop Sheen tells us we are wrong! No, this was not whispered to us by some sinister enemy of the Church; we read it in the Bishop's book. He says:

"Mary then, is for the Moslems, the true *Sayyida*, or Lady. The only possible serious rival to her in their creed would be Fatima, the daughter of Mohammed himself. But after the death of Fatima, Mohammed wrote: 'Thou shalt be the most blessed of all the women in Paradise, after Mary.' In a variant of the text, Fatima is made to say: 'I surpass all the women, except Mary.'

"Missionaries in the future will, more and more, see that their apostolate among the Moslems will be successful in the measure that they preach Our Lady of Fatima. Mary is the advent of Christ, bringing Christ to the people before Christ Himself is born. In any apologetic endeavor, it is always best to start with that which people already accept. Because the Moslems have a devotion to Mary, our missionaries should be satisfied merely to expand and to develop that devotion, with the full realization that Our Blessed Lady will carry the Moslems the rest of the way to her Divine Son . . ."

Have you ever heard the "strange" statement that the Roman Church exalts Mary more than she does Christ? *It may be "strange" but it is also true!* Rapidly it is becoming the cult of the Queen of Heaven, absolutely divorced from the true gospel.

Why Was Judas Not Saved – A "Strange" Explanation

Careful readers of the Bible will conclude that Judas was not saved simply because he knowingly rejected and betrayed the Lord Jesus Christ just as the Scriptures had foretold. Yet Bishop Sheen has a "strange" explanation: "Indeed it is "stranger than fiction".

"We have no record of it in the Gospels, but I have always believed that Judas, both on the way to betray Our Lord and after the betrayal, going with a halter over his arm to hang himself on an aspen tree, deliberately went out of his way to avoid contact with the Mother of Jesus. Probably no one in the history of the world would Our Blessed Mother more willingly have pardoned than Judas, though he did send her Son to the Cross. When Our Lord gave us half His Kingdom in His Mother, He made it almost impossible for any soul to go to hell who ever pleads to her to intercede to her Divine Son. If Judas is in hell, it is because he deliberately turned his back on Mary when he went out to hang himself. If he is not in hell, it is because in that split second, as he looked from his hill to the Hill of Calvary, he saw there the Mother with her Divine Son and died with this prayer on his lips: "Mother of sinners, pray for me!"

The strangest things you ever will hear about Romanism are these very utterances of her own priests and writers. You need not turn to her enemies to hear "strange" reports; an examination of her idolatrous teaching reveals that the half has not been told.

—L.K.T.

BOOK REVIEW

THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION by C. D. Cole—Published by the author and obtainable from THE GOSPEL WITNESS, 130 Gerrard St. E., Toronto 2, Ontario — 37 pages.

In the short compass of thirty-seven pages, Mr. Cole, professor of Systematic Theology in Toronto Baptist Seminary, presents a clear study of the scriptural truth of election. Unfortunately many Christians will not even read the booklet when they see that it deals with the subject of election. Even those who profess most loudly to accept the whole Word of God, at this point, clearly indicate that they are not prepared to accept all that God has said. We challenge all believers to read this small booklet.

The author deals with the following subjects: misconceptions clarified; false views examined and refuted; the doctrine defined, explained and proved; objections considered and answered.

This short study is readable! Some preaching and writing on such subjects can be described as "clear as crystal and as cold as ice." Not so in this booklet! The author has obviously striven for the exposition of truth in a simple, clear and warm style. May all who read this review, read the booklet for themselves. Further, we urge all to commend it to ministers, ministerial students and indeed to all Christians.—L.K.T.

It strikes me that it will help to make heaven even more heavenly to us when God has blessed us to the bringing of other souls to share our bliss in glory.

—C. H. SPURGEON

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A CHURCH WITHOUT ZEAL

The worst thing that can be said of any Christian community is this: "Thou hast a name to live and art dead." "Thou art neither cold nor hot." Our Lord Jesus says: "I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." A church without life and zeal makes Christ sick.—SPURGEON

The Highway of Obedience

"Oh, that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!

"I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries.

"The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured forever.

"He should also have fed them with the finest of the wheat; and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee."—Psalm 81:13-16).

IN THE midst of conflict with error, the tried saint of God often becomes weary and is sorely tempted to give up the whole struggle. Instead of resolutely seeking to follow the Lord and do that which His Word plainly declares, the path of expediency and compromise is regarded with increasing favour. Many side-long glances are cast upon this course which is thronged with temporizing Christians who have no desire to be regarded as "bigots", "obscurantists" or "old fashioned". How often do we hear the expression, "Oh, I know that is not strictly according to the Bible but it works! Look at Mr. Prominent Evangelical; he gathers the crowd and the rest of his message is good: I can see little evidence of visible blessing in the cramped position which you hold."

Oh, the folly of it! One of the very reasons that the religious world does not see the great moving of the mighty hand of God is simply that so many are tempted to add a little to and subtract a little from the sufficient revelation of God. If we only knew, He still pleads with His children, as He did with Israel, "Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!"

This is a divine cry and surely demonstrates that there is no convenient short-cut to blessing. Anyone who would assert that there is, is simply declaring that it is possible to improve upon what God has said! Amazingly enough, the short cuts which are devised by men are usually far more complicated and devious than is the simple way directed by the Lord. While the believer struggles along following his own carefully formulated plans, knowing little of the blessing of the Lord, his heavenly Father beholds and longingly implores, "Oh that my people had hearkened unto me!"

Obedience Conquers Enemies of the Gospel

The Lord indeed calls us to do some things that may be distasteful to the flesh and proud human nature. No one loves fighting but He directs His people to hate error and have nothing to do with the unclean thing. Yet how many believers love to live a life of ease and speak not one word against the deniers of the Lord or of His Word. "Oh," they say, "we intend to preach a 'positive' gospel and the hosts of error will melt away before us." Who says so? Certainly God does not! Constantly He tells His servants to play the part of an Elijah and defy the prophets of Baal. Should we take Him at His word He says, "I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries."

It is at this point, I think, that most of the battles are lost in the realm of theological warfare. Some of God's children are bold in their professions of belief and their

abstract utterances against error. In the moment of battle, however, when the enemy rises to battle back some shrink from the fray. Like Ephraim, though armed, in the day of battle they turn back. God says, "Go forward, walk in my ways." Man says, "No; I dislike battle" and the enemy continues to rule the field. Such is the case in the battle against modernists and ecumenicalists. Too many timid evangelicals are looking for great crowds and fear the face of man. If such would dare to follow the Lord, the enemies would soon be put to flight because the Lord Himself would turn His mighty hand against the adversaries of the gospel.

Obedience Converts Enemies of Gospel

Not only will the enemies of the Lord be put to flight but this text declares that the enemies of the gospel would be won to the Lord! This is entirely contrary to the usual thought of believers. The popular concept in religious circles seems to be that if we dare to expose error and errorists, we will never win them. Therefore we are told that Christians should employ sweet, soft words against those who oppose the gospel in the hope that they might be won to the Lord. But no great movement of men to Christ will ever take place if the power of God is so despised that only those parts of the gospel which please the messenger are presented. God says, "If my people had hearkened unto me . . . the haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto him."

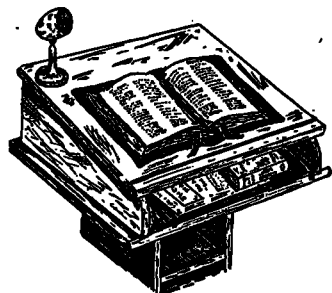
Apparently this is the reason that the enemies of Christ run about unhindered — simply because of the continued disobedience of God's people. Instead of separating themselves from modernists and other false teachers, Christians seek to gain temporary benefits through these associations. Soon the whole atmosphere of this religious Sodom becomes so stupefying that there comes a gradual indifference to the things of God. As a result the enemy remains unmolested and *unconverted!* Instead of rescuing prisoners from Sodom the Christian becomes a respectable citizen of the wicked city. All the while the Lord declares, "Oh, that my people had hearkened unto me!" There is one path of blessing both for ourselves and for those who now are enemies of Christ and that is in strict and loving obedience to Him.

Obedience Crowned With Blessing Untold

The Lord does not promise only to give the obedient servant victory in each specific combat but He crowns him with blessings without number. The whole walk is one in which new and challenging opportunities are presented. Every day brings forth its necessities but He promises further that each day will bring forth spiritual luxuries. The humble, obedient disciple will receive not only the common wheat but also the choicest honey. Those

who walk in the way of the Lord will find their experience is that described in this psalm — they will be conquerors, soul-winners and the blessed of the Lord.

—L.K.T.



English Bible Course

Thirteenth Lecture in the English Bible Course

TORONTO BAPTIST SEMINARY

By Rev. C. D. Cole

Thursday, January 13th, 1955

PAUL'S GRIEF FOR ISRAEL

Romans 9

IT HAS been remarked that there are so many difficulties in the ninth of Romans that it ill becomes anyone to claim to know much about it. Without affecting humility I want to declare that my claims are modest with reference to my knowledge of the ninth of Romans.

The eighth chapter of Romans closed with a note of triumph; the ninth chapter begins with a wail of sorrow. The eighth closed with the assertion that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus; the ninth begins by speaking of those who are separated from the love of Christ. The ninth chapter begins the parenthetical portion of the Roman epistle. The ninth and tenth and eleventh chapters might be left out, and the twelfth will naturally connect with the eighth. Paul concludes his discussion of the righteousness of God in the eighth chapter, reaching that great climax in asserting that there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God in Christ. The twelfth begins the practical portion of the epistle, with the exhortation based upon the mercies of God revealed in the first eight chapters.

This parenthetical portion treats of God's dealings with natural Israel, explaining their sad condition in the present, and holding out hope for them in the future. The word for Israel in these three chapters is found nowhere else in the whole epistle. The question is, how is Israel's present condition to be accounted for? Has God gone back on His word? Have the promises to Israel been broken? Has God cast off His people? Has His word concerning Israel failed of fulfilment? Has God broken the covenant He made with Abraham? These questions are dealt with and answered in this section into which we now enter.

I.

Paul's Grief Over Israel

In verses one to three we have Paul's well-nigh indescribable grief over Israel's sad condition. He is going to use such strong words that he feels the necessity of affirming his sincerity: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart." The apostle speaks in the sight of Christ

out of a conscience inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Jews regarded the apostle Paul as their most determined enemy, and his words here are in refutation of their judgment of his attitude toward them. They indeed hated him, but he meets their hatred always with sorrow and with sympathy. Paul was in great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart as he thought of his kinsmen in the flesh. His grief was not because of their political situation, sad as it was, but because of their spiritual condition. His grief was not because they were in servitude to Caesar, but because they were not servants to the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul's compassion for his people was compassion for sinners. To the apostle Paul the only human tragedy was to be separated from the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the kind of passion that we need more of today. Materialism has so gripped us that we show more pity for men in temporal afflictions than we do for men as sinners in danger of hell.

Paul's Strange Words

Paul's strong and strange words of verse three have been variously interpreted: "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." This passage is usually made to mean that Paul out of love for his kinsmen actually wished himself accursed from Christ for their sake, or that he could wish himself accursed from Christ if it would do any good, and if such a wish could accomplish their salvation. This wish is sometimes made to parallel the prayer of Moses for Israel. When Israel had sinned by the worship of the golden calf Moses prayed for the forgiveness of Israel, and said: "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." I can hardly see a very close parallel between the prayer of Moses and the wish of Paul. Moses could have had reference only to physical and temporal death, while Paul's wish involved eternal separation from Jesus Christ. It does seem strange that Paul, after exulting, as he had in the eighth chapter, that nothing could separate us from the love of God in Christ, would now so soon express a wish, or say that he could wish, to be separated from Jesus Christ. Calvin thought that Paul made the wish in a state of ecstasy, which means that he was somewhat beside himself because of his terrible grief and extreme sorrow for his people. Jowett says that we must understand the language as that of feeling rather than the language of reason. John Brown says that this is not a peremptory or absolute wish, but a declaration that were it consistent with the will of God, and for the glory of Christ, he could willingly exchange conditions with his unbelieving brethren. He says, however, that Paul knew that such a thing was not possible. Robert Haldane puts the words "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ" in a parenthesis, and in the past tense, making it refer to Paul's attitude prior to his conversion. Mr. Haldane also makes the word for "wish" to mean boast, and renders the clause like this: "I was once boasting, or made it my boast, to be separated from Christ." The reference to the original will show that it is the imperfect tense expressing action continuous in the past. If this should be the way to deal with this difficult passage it does show that Paul is qualified to sympathize with his unbelieving brethren because he was once like them, boasting that he would have nothing to do with Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Israel's Ancestral Glory

Verses four and five tell of Israel's ancestral glory, and their external privileges. Israel was the most favored nation that has ever been on this earth. Israel was distinguished from all the other nations. They were Israelites, they were the descendants of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel because as a prince he prevailed with God. They were the only people ever adopted as a family of God on this earth. When God sent Moses to Pharaoh He told Moses to say to Pharaoh: "Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first-born: and I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn." The glory must refer to the Shekinah, or the emblematic presence of God with Israel. Israel was the only nation with whom God ever made a covenant, and so the covenants referred to must have been the covenants made with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. The written law was given to Israel at Sinai, the only nation ever to be so distinguished by God. The service of God refers to the ritual worship in the tabernacle and in the temple. All other nations were left to their own superstitious inventions in the matter of approach to God and worship. Israel had ordinances of Divine worship. They alone had the Bible, filled with promises both of a temporal and a spiritual nature. There were many promises concerning the coming of a Messiah. They had an illustrious ancestry in such men as Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and David. And the greatest blessing of all is in these words: "Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever." The God-man was a Jew on His human side. So recalling their ancestral glory must have made Paul's grief all the more poignant as he thought of their sad condition. What a contrast between their present condition and what might have been expected!

II.

Paul's Problem

Now the problem before Paul is how to reconcile God's promise to Abraham with Israel's sad condition. The question is, we repeat, Has the Word of God failed? Has the covenant with Abraham been broken? The Messiah had come, and Israel, His own people, were cut off from the blessings to which it had prepared the world, and rejected from these very blessings. How will Paul solve this problem: Has the Word of God failed?

The Promise Has Not Failed

Paul deals with the problem in verses six to thirty-three. The first thing he says is that the word of promise has not failed, it has not failed to take effect. God is faithful to all His promises, and He will do all He has promised. His word will stand fast, of that the apostle is sure. And he cannot think for a moment that it is to be explained on the ground that God's word has failed. But how will Paul reconcile the promise of God to Abraham with Israel's present sad condition? He will go to the word, he will examine the promises of God, and show their limitations. God's promise to Abraham, Paul will show, did not include all of his fleshly descendants. "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel." All the descendants of Jacob, he will show, were not included in the promise. There is a natural Israel, and there is a spiritual Israel. He has already shown in the second chapter of Romans that he is not a true Jew who is one outwardly, and that real circumcision is not that outward

circumcision in the flesh. Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children. Being a descendent of Abraham does not make one a child of God. The promise to Abraham did not include all of his descendants. Limitations were specifically stated: "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." The children of the flesh, Paul says, are not the children of God, and are not the children of the promise. The children of the promise are the ones who are counted for the seed. Israel was a natural descendent of Abraham, but Israel and his posterity were not beneficiaries of the spiritual covenant God made with Abraham. And what a rebuke this is to all those people today who like to talk about the universal Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man! For the children of the flesh, the children of nobody's flesh, are the children of God, or the children of the promise.

Isaac was the child of promise. He was supernaturally born, as a type of all of God's children. In Galatians 4:28, Paul says: "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." The covenant blessings promised to Abraham excluded Ishmael. The Jews who claimed covenant blessings on the ground of their natural relationship to Abraham had no better claim than Ishmael and his descendants had.

Esau and Jacob

Then Paul shows that there is further limitation of the promise in Isaac's sons Esau and Jacob. The Jew might explain that the promise was restricted to Isaac because Ishmael was the son of a foreign woman, the son of the slave woman named Hagar. But Paul obviates that explanation by showing that the limitation could not have been placed upon that ground, because in the case of Esau and Jacob they had the same father, and also the same mother. Before they were born God made distinction between them, choosing Jacob and his descendants, and rejecting Esau and his line. And the only reason assigned was "that the purpose of God according to election might stand." So the covenant promise to Abraham was further limited, and of Jacob's descendants there was still limitation and further restriction. All who are of Israel, all the descendants of Jacob, were not the children of God.

III.

Paul's Defence of Sovereign Election

Paul emphasizes that the distinctions which were made were Sovereignly made, and not on the ground of good or evil in the character, or the conduct, of the ones chosen. Paul has vindicated God's word by proving that the promise belongs to chosen ones among the nation, and chosen for nothing in themselves, but solely after God's own Sovereign will.

At this stage Paul anticipates the question that naturally arises against God's Sovereign election. "Is there unrighteousness with God?" Now if the choice had been made on foreseen faith, or good works, no such objection could have arisen. The Jew is typical of the natural man everywhere who never objects to election on the ground of something foreseen in the sinner. A doctrine of election that is agreeable to the natural man, that is agreeable to human reason, is not Paul's doctrine, and is not the doctrine of the Bible. Paul resents the implication that there is unrighteousness with God, and says, "God forbid," or "By no means." He then argues and defends the Sovereignty of God, bringing proof of God's Sover-

eighty from the Old Testament Scriptures. Exodus 33:19, is the first quotation, and we have it in verses fifteen and sixteen of Romans nine: "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."

Mercy Sovereignly Bestowed

When Israel had sinned in the worship of the golden calf God sent a plague; He was angry. He describes Israel as a stiffnecked people, and says that He will not go with them to the land of promise, but calls upon Moses to lead the people that he has brought out of Egypt into the land of promise. And God says, "While I will not go personally, I will send an angel." Moses goes into action, and prays one of the most remarkable prayers ever recorded, even in the Word of God. And in the prayer he says, "Lead us not up unless Thou wilt go with us." He reminds God that He had revealed Himself as a God of grace and of mercy. Moses in this prayer prevails with God, and God says to him, "Thou hast found grace in my sight." But at the same time God reminds Moses that He is Sovereign, and will bestow mercy where He pleases to bestow it. In other words, God's Sovereignty means that He will bestow mercy upon whomsoever He pleases, and that the ground for mercy is in God and not in the sinner. So Paul says, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." All this is not to be taken to mean that the human will is not to be taken into account. It is not to be taken to mean that there should be no striving or interest in this matter of salvation. But what it means is that the ground for mercy is in God and not in man, and that God is Sovereign in the bestowal of His mercy.

Isaac wanted Esau to have the blessing, and Esau ran to get the venison so as to secure the blessing, but God had determined otherwise, and God Sovereignly interposed. God had made choice between Jacob and Esau before they were born, so that it could not have been based upon their character or good works, but in order "that the purpose of God, according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth." Jacob got the blessing through deception and trickery, but not because of deception and trickery, but rather in spite of the deception. He was God's Sovereign choice for the covenant blessing, and that is the only reason assigned for Jacob's being chosen and Esau being rejected.

The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart

Exodus 9:16, is the next quotation, and we have it in the seventeenth verse: "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." The hardening of Pharaoh's heart by God has been variously explained. The usual explanation is that Pharaoh hardened his own heart, and that God hardened his heart by way of judicial punishment. But in the history of the case it is said about ten times that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, and it is stated a number of times that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. Both of these statements are true: God hardened Pharaoh's heart; Pharaoh hardened his own heart. But they are not one and the same thing. Pharaoh's hardening of his own heart was but the manifesta-

tion of his wicked character, while God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart was to bring about His own purpose, it was to accomplish what He had purposed to accomplish. God's purpose in hardening Pharaoh's heart was that he would not let Israel go. If Pharaoh had willingly and readily allowed Israel to leave Egypt there would have been no miracles in Egypt and at the Red Sea. If Pharaoh had sweetly surrendered the Israelites and released them, God's purpose and program would have been wrecked, God's power and God's Name would not have been heralded abroad, nor would the children of Israel been famous as the chosen people of God. But God had a purpose to make His power known, to make His Name broadcast throughout the earth, and God's hand in all of this was for that purpose.

When God commissioned Moses to return to Egypt and appear before Pharaoh with a command for him to let Israel go, He said to him while he was still in the land of Midian, as recorded in Exodus 4:21: "But I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go." And after the first unsuccessful attempt to deliver Israel, Moses resigned in a spirit of despondency, and with complaint of words. And God renewed the commission, and said to him: "I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt." The fact that God hardened Pharaoh's heart is declared, but the manner of His hardening it is not given or explained, and I shall not try to explain it, but simply state some obvious facts.

I think there are two dangers or faults in dealing with the ninth chapter of Romans. I think there can be the fault of over-explaining, and also the fault of under-explaining, or ignoring it. And I think the fault largely has been in the way of ignoring the plain statements of the ninth of Romans. I would do neither. Now notice, both prophecy and history in this case make it clear that the hardening by God preceded the hardening by Pharaoh. The hardening by God was not the result but the cause of Pharaoh's refusal to let Israel go. When God commissioned Moses to appear before Pharaoh and issue His command, remember He said to Moses, "But I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go." It was God's purpose to make His power known, and advertise His Name throughout the earth, and He was dealing with Pharaoh and with the Egyptians for this purpose. And therefore He said, "I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go."

More Than Bare Permission

The hardening by God means more than the bare permission to let Pharaoh harden his own heart. The language here means that there was Divine action on Pharaoh's heart. God did something to Pharaoh's heart that bare permission does not express. In a comment on this, in Psalm 105:25, we read, "He turned their heart to hate his people." That is, God turned the heart of Pharaoh and the Egyptians to hate His people. That means more than bare permission. God's hand was in Pharaoh's case doing something to Pharaoh's heart.

Take a case, by way of illustration, that may make it a little easier for us to see this. Take the case of the death of Jesus Christ. All of us can recognize that the death of the Lord Jesus Christ was Divinely ordained, it was fore-ordained from the foundation of the world. And in bringing about the death of Jesus Christ God did

more than merely permit the Jews to kill Him. God's hand was in what they did, controlling their sins, and directing their sins, so that in putting Jesus Christ to death they did exactly what God had ordained should come to pass. And that is what He is doing in hardening the heart of Pharaoh. He is controlling and directing the sins of the heart of Pharaoh, so that Pharaoh will accomplish and bring to pass what He had determined to be done. Let it be said once and for all that God did not put evil, He did not put sin in the heart of Pharaoh, nor did He entice or lead him to sin. God did not make the heart of Pharaoh wicked, but He did control and direct the wickedness already in his heart, to bring about His purpose. God makes the wrath of man to praise Him by keeping his sins in the channel of His determinate will and eternal counsel. The case of Pharaoh is no more difficult or perplexing than many other cases in the Word of God.

In Second Chronicles, 18:22, we read concerning Ahab: "Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of these thy prophets." Look at God's positive act in the case of the ten kings referred to in Revelation 17:17: "For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." And also in the case of King Saul we see God controlling and directing evil spirits. The hardening of Pharaoh's heart exemplifies what we read in Proverbs 21:1: "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."

A Serious Objection

All this leads to another objection, and a very serious one: "Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?" Paul thinks of an insolent antagonist. This opponent thinks he has a plausible argument. If God has His way, and accomplishes His purpose, then nobody actually resists His will. And this being so, how can He find fault? That is the reasoning of the flesh, of the natural man. Notice that this objector does not say to Paul, "You are misinterpreting the Old Testament Scripture." This objector does not deny the Old Testament Scriptures, but he is replying against them, he is replying against God. So in dealing with this objection Paul does not try to satisfy the objector, but simply rebukes him: "O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?"

The Objector Rebuked

The apostle makes a two-fold answer to the objector. He first says, "You have no right to reply against God." And secondly he says, "There is no reason for your replying against God, no more reason for your replying than there is for the clay saying to the potter, 'Why hast thou made me thus?'" That is what man is doing when he replies to what God does in Providence, and to what God says in His Word. And that is what this insolent antagonist is doing: he is replying to God's Word. He is not denying it; he recognizes that God said it, but he makes reply against what God says, and against what God does. I will tell you, beloved, the only thing becoming any sinner in this world is to fall in humility before God, and call upon Him for mercy, and to inquire whether there is any mercy with God. And when the sinner does that, and

learns that there is mercy with God in Jesus Christ, and turns to Jesus Christ in simple child-like faith, he will find of a surety that there is mercy with God. But God is Sovereign, and the ground of mercy is with God Who showeth mercy. Such a thing as deserving mercy is a contradiction of terms. God has His own glory in view in dealing with sinners. A sinner deserves nothing from God but destruction. The sinner has no righteous claims upon God's mercy. God takes a sinner, fitted for destruction, like Pharaoh was, and deals with him in longsuffering, in much patience, in order to display His power and advertise His Name. Pharaoh got what he deserved. Pharaoh was not mistreated. God did not deal with Pharaoh unjustly. God did not make him a sinner, but He did control and direct him in sinning for the accomplishment of His purpose. God takes other sinners and makes a display of His mercy toward them. There are vessels of mercy as well as vessels of wrath. He gives some what none deserves, but He deals unjustly with nobody. We can put a pin down here, and stand by our guns. The finally impenitent will get what they deserve, while the vessels of mercy will get what Jesus Christ deserves. The sinner fits himself for hell; God graciously prepares the vessel of mercy unto glory.

Paul next shows that there are vessels of mercy among the Gentiles. He quotes Hosea as a prediction of the calling of the Gentiles: "As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved." Reference to Hosea will show that Hosea is referring to the restoration of the ten tribes, but Paul quotes the passage as applicable to the Gentiles. Then the apostle quotes from Isaiah to prove that only a remnant of the Jews would be saved, and except for Divine intervention the whole nation of Jews would have gone the way of Sodom and Gomorrah. That is what Paul is proving from Isaiah. Human depravity, whether in Jew or Gentile, if left to run its course, will take all men to hell.

But somebody may say, as some have said, that all these passages in the Old Testament have nothing to say about eternal destiny, nothing about Heaven and hell, and that they only deal with earthly privileges and external blessings. Quite so. But Paul makes them terminate on Israel's condition, and the calling of the Gentiles. Paul brings these Old Testament Scriptures over into the realm of eternal destiny, for to be separated from Christ means hell, and to have Him means Heaven. That is the application that the apostle Paul makes as he uses these Old Testament passages.

The Promised Seed: Both Jews and Gentiles

So the seed promised to Abraham included Gentiles as well as Jews. Salvation does not depend upon nationality, but upon faith in Jesus Christ. In Galatians 3:28-29: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." To the natural man, to human reasoning, the salvation of Gentiles seemed improbable. They were not seeking after righteousness; they were heathen. But God called them by His gospel and they became righteous by faith. The Jews were religious; they were seeking after righteousness by the law, but did not find it. God's Word, says Paul, has not failed. It was predicted that Gentiles would be saved, and they are being saved. It was said also that

the mass of Israel would reject Christ and be lost. Christ is to them, and has been through the centuries, a stumbling stone and a rock of offense. But those that believe on Him will not be put to shame. Those that believe on Christ will not be disappointed, they will not make haste. From the safe place we have in Jesus Christ we shall make no hurried retreat. He is a fortress that cannot be stormed, He is a fortress that cannot be surprised. Jesus Christ is a fortress that will not crumble, and all who flee for refuge in Jesus Christ will find mercy, everlasting mercy, plenteous mercy, tender mercy, with God. In Him, in Jesus Christ, and nowhere else, we are everlastingly safe. And all of this is based upon the Sovereignty of God, for the ground of mercy is not in the creature, but in God. And yet, God's Word is so full of promises of mercy to all those who come to Jesus Christ, the only Mercy Seat there is between God and men.

I trust that all of us here have made our way, led by the Spirit of God, to Jesus Christ as the Mercy Seat, and that He is our fortress, He is the place of safety, and the only place of safety, for us. And every one who rests upon Him has everlasting life, and has found plenteous and everlasting mercy with God. But above all we must recognize that mercy finds its ground and reason only in God, and not in the creature, not in the sinner.

"HE THAT HUMBLETH HIMSELF"

IN a fairly wide and varied association with Christian people, covering a period of over thirty years, we have been so unfortunate that we have never yet met either a man or a woman who was really perfect,—or at least, if we have, our judgment was too imperfect to recognize their perfection. We have met some who professed perfection, but of these, most of them have been of an emotional type who have been carried away by the appeal of an extreme view of what the Bible calls, sanctification. But the majority of these have sooner or later come back to earth, and have had to acknowledge their error.

We have met another smugly complacent type whose perfectionism was a combination of natural egoism, religious conceit, and spiritual pride. But the majority of people did a good deal of stumbling in learning to walk; and after learning to walk, have limped more than once.

Abraham was pretty much of a saint, yet he turned aside into Egypt, and, though a believer, was not wholly truthful while there. The name of Sarah is included in the list of saints of great faith, and yet it is recorded that she laughed at the seeming impossibility of the fulfilment of the divine promise; and was rebuked by the angel for doing so. Isaac was an exemplary character, but he stumbled just where Abraham had stumbled, and made the mistake in Gerar that Abraham had made in Egypt. Jacob, of course, was notoriously imperfect; and though the faults of Joseph are not recorded, he cannot have been wholly free from error.

Moses, and Aaron, and Miriam, and Joshua, and Samuel, and David, to mention only a few, had their hours of weakness when evil gained an advantage over them. And even the good Hezekiah, when in one matter he was "left" by the Spirit of God, proved that his heart was as deceitful as that of the rank and file, and that he was just as much subject to vanity as any of us.

Peter stumbled both before and after Pentecost, and was graciously rebuked by the Lord for the first offence,

and faithfully admonished by Paul for the second. Nor was even the Apostle Paul free from the general temptation, and a thorn in the flesh was sent to him to prevent his becoming spiritually proud.

And it is still true that all God's people have temptations to evil,—

"And none, O Lord, have perfect rest,
For none are wholly free from sin;
And they who fain would serve Thee best
Are conscious most of wrong within."

It is not our occasional stumbling, however, that impoverishes us, and robs us of fruitfulness and power, but rather the pride that forbids the acknowledgment of our sin. The greatest saints have always been of the humblest spirit. Abraham came back to the altar and began all over again. David, for a long time, kept silent, and while he did so his moisture was turned to the drought of summer. But he broke the silence at last, saying, "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."

When Samuel rebuked Saul, and told him that the Lord had rent the kingdom of Israel from him, Saul said, "I have sinned: yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord thy God." Saul was unwilling to humble himself before the people, and publicly acknowledge his wrong; and though temporarily he was honoured before the people, he ultimately lost his kingdom.

Oh, what havoc has been wrought in the church of Christ by the foolish pride of God's people who know they have sinned, have made a mistake, and taken the wrong course, but who are too proud to acknowledge their error! A man who is really true and genuine at heart, if overtaken by an error of any sort, will hate that wrong in himself more than in another, and will be in haste to acknowledge it, and to make his acknowledgment as public as the wrong.

Hundreds of people will read this simple article who will be convicted in their own consciences, even as they read; and if such would avail themselves of the earliest opportunity to acknowledge his or her wrong to those whom they have wronged, if they have wronged a brother or sister, and then publicly acknowledge his error before the church, he would be God's instrument of bringing about a genuine revival.

Nothing is more abhorrent to God than human pride, and of all varieties of pride, that which boasts itself in its superior spirituality is the most obnoxious. What a blessing it is that God is plenteous in mercy, that He has so clearly stated that "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"! What blessing would come to multitudes could we but heed the simple teaching of the Word of God, and as soon as our sin is made known to us, hasten to confess it, and seek afresh the cleansing of the precious blood! "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy"; "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

"It is not the size of the dog in the fight, but the size of the fight in the dog that counts."

"He Hath Done All Things Well"

THIS was the verdict of a multitude of people who were wonder-struck when they beheld the works of Jesus. They observed that whatever He did was done thoroughly, perfectly. The miracle they had just witnessed was but typical of His whole career: He not only made the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak, but He did all things well.

We have here a great doctrine. The truth is that whatever Christ does is well done. This will appear from an inspection of Nature's workshop. Look at the perfection of Nature's order: the correlation of its multitudinous and widely varied systems; the co-ordination of means with ends; the interrelation of different forces; the conservation of energy; the facilities for repair; the utilization and transformation of wastes; the combination of utility and beauty; the beauty of the useful, and the usefulness of the beautiful; the marvellous reproductiveness of nature; its perfection of balance; its media of light and sound, optical and acoustical adjustments; the invariability of the order of the procession of the seasons, the fitness and essentiality of climatic productions, and the consequent general adequacy of its commissarial supplies; and over all and through all the universality of the reign of law. Survey this wide field and what is the judgment of intelligence? Get your answer from a little child who wonderingly views the beauty of flowers and fields; or from some humble worshipper, the ears of whose soul are attuned to catch the music of wind and wave; or from the cool, calm, careful and dispassionate man of science, as he magnifies the infinitesimal, and examines the nervous system of an animalcule, or projects his vision through some mighty telescope for the study of immeasurably distant planetary systems—the universal verdict is this, "He hath done all things well".

And if you bring under review the sphere of divine activity which we call Providence, you will observe the same faultlessness of design and perfection of execution. The book of Esther contains no mention of the name of God. And yet if you read its story from Mordecai's bringing up of Hadassah, her entrance into the royal palace, the wickedness of Haman, the sleeplessness of the king, the subsequent exaltation of Mordecai, and the ultimate conquest of evil and the triumph of righteousness, you will understand the saying:

"Thrice blest is he to whom is given
The instinct that can tell,
That God is on the field when He
Is the most invisible."

Esther is as full of God as the Psalms or the Gospels. And Esther is an epitome of all history. There is an invisible Hand which shapes, as there is an unerring Mind which plans the affairs of men, and by that plan and purpose, Haman is judged in the end of the day, and Mordecai is exalted. And it is always true: the law has not been repealed which decrees, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

We say, therefore, that in the wide realm of Providence, concerning the divine actions, the verdict is the same: "He hath done all things well."

And in that part of it which particularly concerns us, there is no room for other judgment. We know that life to us, at close range, is a noisy, clanging, loom, wherein we see a thousand strands which appear to be inextricably tangled; but if you will go behind the loom and lift a little corner of the finished web, and look back upon the years gone by, you will join in the approving verdict of the people of the coasts of Decapolis, and declare, "Here, too, He hath done all things well."

And to the host of believers who will read this article we need only mention the third sphere of divine operations: In the realm of grace, perfection is absolute. Read again the record of the eternal planning and the long unfolding. Then behold the star, and follow it until you bow in adoration at the manger-cradle with the wise men from the east, and worship with the shepherds to whom the angels sang. Then follow that prolonged Manifestation of divine kindness in the ministry to human need, which culminates in the Cross, and the open grave. Behold the opened heavens—the Christ ascending and the Spirit descending; and follow once more the path along which redeeming grace has journeyed with its abounding benedictions. And as you follow the footsteps of God through the centuries, observing the triumph of the gospel in all lands, you will be constrained to say again, "Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. He hath done all things well."

"See where it shines in Jesus' face,
The brightest image of His grace;
God in the Person of His Son,
Hath all His mightiest works outdone."

Such, in brief, is the doctrine of divine perfection. We are constrained to exclaim, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches."—"He hath done all things well."

THE CROSS, THE CURE FOR TROUBLE

What is the cure for all this social chaos, domestic trouble; secret pain—this wrong-doing as between kings and subjects, fathers and children, man and man? The one cure is the cross of Christ. Have I not preached that with some consistency ever since you knew me? Have I ever given a second prescription for this malady of the world? If I ever have, allow me now to tear it up—publicly tear it up—so that nobody can ever patch it together so as to make one word of it through all time. The prescription I will give is given to me. The prescription by which I would abide according to the exhortation of Scripture—the prescription which I would preach to all mankind—is this: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from sin."—JOSEPH PARKER

THE OPEN ROAD

The road of good works is blocked up by our past sins, and it is sure to be further blocked up by future sins; we ought, therefore, to rejoice that God has commended to us the open road of faith.—SPURGEON

For Younger Readers DIAMONDS

One day a lady, with her two daughters, sat on a park bench, in a secluded place, eating a dainty lunch. Just as they were finishing their repast they noticed two barefooted children strolling along. They were both boys — one had newspapers under his arms, the other a bootblack kit. They were probably brothers. As to their ages, one might be ten and the other twelve; the only way to get at that was by guessing.

"Come, my dears," said the mother to her daughters, "it is time to move on. Leave the lunch box on the bench; we'll not want it again."

The barefooted boys heard what the lady said, and looking at each other, smiled.

"Mebbe there's something in it, Sammy," whispered the older boy.

"Oh! oh!" with joyful expectancy; "mebbe there is."

Before the lady and children were out of sight the boys had possession of the seat and the lunch box. In the latter they found a chicken sandwich and a patty-pan sponge cake.

"Take yer choice, Sammy," said the older boy, cheerfully.

"That's what yer allus say when there's anythin' ter divide. Now yer choose this time, Billy."

"No, sirree," from Billy; "you're goin ter choose. Which is it Sammy, eh, chicken sandwich or sponge cake?"

It was hard to choose, but Sammy, being very hungry, wasted no time.

"I'll take de sandwich; I just love chicken sandwiches."

The sandwich disappeared in a twinkling, but the patty-pan cake remained undisturbed.

"Why don't yer eat yer cake?" demanded Sammy, wonderingly.

Billy laughed gleefully as though he had just finished a good, square meal.

"Dat's yer second course," said he; "yer wants ter be stylish w'en yer eatin' in de park."

"I won't hev no second course," declared Sammy. "I've had my choice, and I've eaten it; the cake's yours, and you've got ter eat it."

"Sposin', I don't want de cake," said Billy.

"But yer do."

"No, I don't, an' dat's a fact," he said emphatically.

"Truly and bluey?"

"Truly and bluey," was the answer. Consequently Sammy ate the cake as eagerly and as hungrily as he had eaten the sandwich.

The lady and her daughters having again seated themselves in the shade of some shrubbery had overheard every word of the conversation.

"That boy Billy is a hero," the lady whispered softly, her eyes becoming misty. "Now, children, wait here quietly while I leave you for a few minutes. If those little fellows should start to leave, detain them until I come."

"What are you going to do, Mamma!" they asked together. "Hush!" she said. "Wait and see." She went off hastily, returning again with a smile on her face.

"Where have you been, Mamma?" asked one of the girls.

"What makes you smile so?" asked the other.

"Look," said she; "then you can guess."

What they saw was a negro waiter from the dairy

kitchen in the grove. He was just handing a tray to Billy.

"Wid de compliments of a friend," he said showing his white teeth in a broad grin.

"Taint for us," was Billy's answer looking at it longingly; "it's some mistake."

"Is your name Billy?"

"Yes, sir."

"And," nodding toward the other boy, "is he Sammy?"

"Yes."

"It's fo' you; I know it. Now, when you're through eatin' bring de tray an' dishes to de dairy kitchen in de grove. You know where that is don't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"All right." And he hurried off.

The boys looked at each other and laughed. It was a mystery to them, but a beautiful one. The food was abundant now — no need for the big-hearted Billy to go without, and the tears rushed to the waiting lady's eyes as she noticed the eagerness with which he grabbed a biscuit and ate it. There were two glasses of cool, creamy milk — not the ill-smelling beer that occasionally found its way to the place they called home — but good, rich milk. Sammy was already drinking from one of the glasses.

There were ham sandwiches and buttered biscuits, sponge cake squares, molasses cookies and cold, sliced chicken. Besides, there were two oranges. After Billy had eaten one biscuit he said: "Let's divide things into four parts."

"What fer?"

"Why, there's Mommie and Sally, yer know. Won't Mommie be glad? Won't Sally?" chuckling with delight.

Then, counting the biscuit he had eaten as a part of his share, he carefully packed "Mommie's and Sally's share" in the lunch box on the seat. Putting an orange in Sammy's hand, he slipped the other in the box.

"That's your orange, Billy, you must eat it."

"I don't want no orange," said Billy. "This is for Mommie and Sally, half and half." His face shone with delight; this was truly a red-letter day to him.

Sammy shoved his orange along the seat slowly.

"Put this in the box, too, Billy, an' then Mommie and Sally can each have one," he said.

"No, sirree," Billy cried out; "none o' that; you haven't had an orange since — since — oh, I can't remember when."

"An' I'm not going ter hev any now," asserted Sammy.

"You just love oranges," declared Billy.

"So do you. I'm goin to save my orange fer Sally an yours is fer Mommie," said Sammy.

"Oh, the poor little fellow!" exclaimed the lady.

"He's a hero, too, isn't he, Momma?" said one of the girls.

"Indeed he is."

After the lunch box was packed and tied with a cord the repast began in earnest, and was enjoyed to the full. The boys ate like the starved creatures they were, talking meanwhile with their mouths full about how good everything was, and what a wonderful "friend" that was who had remembered them "wid such a load of good things."

"I guess it's God," was Billy's conclusion, looking up through the trees to the blue sky, as if to solve the delightful problem. "He must care a lot for us," said Sammy, joyously.

"He does," and over Billy's plain face there came a radiance that was lovely to see.

"Come, children," said the lady, rising, "let us pass on."

We have learned our lesson. Those little fellows belong to the slums, but they are diamonds, diamonds in the rough."—*Gospel Herald*.

PRUDENCE

"Woe unto them that are prudent in their own sight."—Is. v. 2, 3.

O child of God, arouse! We have apotheosized Prudence and Caution long enough. Prudence is a beautiful grace, but of all the family of Christian graces I like her the least, for she has been married so often to Laziness, Sloth and Stupidity. We have a million idlers in the Lord's vineyards who pride themselves on their prudence. "Be prudent," said the disciples to Christ, "and stay away from Jerusalem"; but He went. "Be prudent," said Paul's friends, "and look out for what you say to Felix," but he thundered away until the ruler's knees knocked together. In the eyes of the world the most imprudent men that ever lived were Martin Luther, and John Oldcastle, and Bunyan, and Wesley, and Knox. My opinion is that the most imprudent and reckless thing is to stand still. It is well to hear our commander's voice when he says "Halt!" but quite as important to hear it when he says "Forward!" This Gospel ship made to plough the sea at fifteen knots an hour, is not making three. Sometimes it is more prudent to ride your horse slowly and pick out the way for his feet, and not strike him with the spurs; but when a band of Shosonee Indians are after you in full tilt, the most prudent thing for you to do, is to plunge in the rowels and put your horse to a full run, shouting, "Go 'long!" until the Rocky Mountains echo it. The foes of God are pursuing us. The world, the flesh, and the devil are after us; and our wisest course is to go ahead at swiftest speed.

When the Church of God gets to advancing too fast, it will be time enough to use caution. No need of putting on the brakes while going up hill. Do not let us sit down waiting for something "to turn up," but go ahead, in the name of God, and *turn it up*. The great danger to the Church now is not sensation, but stagnation. Oh that the Lord God would send a host of aroused and consecrated men to set the Church on fire, and to turn the world upside down.

—T. DEWITT TALMAGE

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 19 First Quarter Lesson 5 January 30, 1955

OLIVE L. CLARK, Ph.D. (Tor.)

GEHAZI REBUKED FOR COVETOUSNESS

Lesson Text: 2 Kings 5:15-27.

Golden Text: "Be sure your sin will find you out."

—Numbers 32:23.

I. Naaman and Elisha: A Humble Servant: verses 15-19.

Naaman, the captain of the host of Syria, might have returned to his own land immediately after the miraculous cleansing from leprosy. But his heart had been renewed, and the great man did not shrink from appearing before the humble man of God, as he had done before, but, on the other hand, voluntarily returned to make a confession of his faith in God, to thank the prophet (Luke 17:15-19), and to reward him. He paid due reverence to the prophet, since he now trusted the prophet's God (Matt. 10:40, 41).

Elisha refused to accept a reward for his services. (Gen. 14:23), lest any should think that the gifts of God might be

purchased (Dan. 6:16, 17; Acts 8:18-20). He was sufficiently honoured when he was used of God to bring health and healing to Naaman. Christians are but stewards of the grace of God (1 Pet. 4:10), and it is not a special mark of merit to pass along spiritual blessing to those for whom it is intended (Luke 17:10; 1 Cor. 9:16; 2 Tim. 2:2). We have nothing which we did not receive from God (1 Cor. 4:7), and the Holy Spirit bestows His gifts in sovereign manner to those who are to administer them for the Lord (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11). Elisha desired no other reward than the joy of hearing Naaman praise God (1 Thess. 2:19, 20).

Naaman's request to take back with him two mules' burden of earth with which to erect an altar to Jehovah in his own land (Exod. 20:24) probably signifies that the very ground of Israel's land had become sacred to him. Certain places become invested with spiritual significance to us when they are associated with holy experiences. We read that the Holy Spirit filled the house where the disciples were gathered on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:2). Naaman would ever be reminded of his great deliverance (Psa. 78:35; Isa. 17:10; 2 Pet. 1:9; 3:1).

Although Naaman was now a worshipper of Jehovah, the Syrian king whom he served was an idolater. It was the duty of the captain of the host to accompany the king, and bow his head in the heathen temple, but in his heart Naaman would be doing reverence to the one true God. His tender conscience prompted him to ask pardon for what might appear to be an act of compromise. On the other hand, he might better have severed his connection completely with idolatry. We have not all the facts, and it is difficult for us at this distance to judge. A similar difficult situation faced Christian teachers in the mission schools in Japan before the last war. Compelled by law to order the whole school to bow before the image of the Emperor, many of the teachers complied with the letter of the law, lest the schools be closed altogether and no further opportunity given them to reach the children for the Lord, but they counselled the scholars to bow in heart to the Lord God (Luke 13:51-53).

II. Naaman and Gehazi: A Deceitful Servant: verses 20-27.

Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, failed to follow the example of his master, who had refused to accept a reward for services rendered. Disobedience to his master's expressed will was the first step in Gehazi's downfall. The cause of his disobedience was the overpowering desire for money; he coveted material things (Matt. 6:33; Luke 12:15; Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5; 1 Tim. 3:3). Godliness is not to be used as means for private gain, although many do not hesitate to exploit men in the name of religion (1 Thess. 2:5; 1 Tim. 6:5, 6). They fleece the sheep, instead of feeding them, as a true shepherd does (Ezek. 34:2-10; 1 Pet. 5:2, 3; 2 Pet. 2:3; Jude 12).

Naaman, still grateful and humble, alighted from his chariot to meet Elisha's servant and asked anxiously after the prophet. His tender solicitude should have a lesson to the mercenary servant, who did not deserve such kind consideration.

Gehazi was not merely covetous, but he was also deceitful (Jer. 48:10), attempting to cover up his sin by making three false statements: (1) He pretended that Elijah had sent him. Modernistic preachers make the same claim, alleging that they have been sent by God (Jer. 14:14; 23:21). (2) He asserted that Elisha needed the silver and changes of raiment for two young men, sons of the prophets. He feigned unselfishness and told a plausible story. (3) On his return to Elisha, he denied that he had gone out.

Elisha was not deceived: as a prophet he knew what had taken place, for evidently God had revealed it unto him. After rebuking his servant for worldliness and covetousness, he pronounced the judgment—the plague of leprosy (Numb. 12:1, 10, 15), a physical uncleanness which illustrates the consuming moral plague of sin. Gehazi's sin did not go unpunished; his sin found him out (Numb. 12:6-10; 32:23; 2 Kings 15:5; Rom. 6:23).

Daily Bible Readings

- Jan. 24—Punishment of Conscience Gen. 4:8-15
- Jan. 25—Punishment of Jealousy 1 Sam. 18:7-9; 31:1-5
- Jan. 26—Punishment of Greed Acts 5:1-11
- Jan. 27—Punishment of Denial Luke 22:54-62
- Jan. 28—Punishment of Betrayal Matt. 27:3-10
- Jan. 29—Punishment of the Lost 2 Pet. 2:9-14
- Jan. 30—Punishment of Believers 2 Cor. 5:10-13