

# Concordia Theological Monthly



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ARCHIVES

## HOMILETICS

### *Studies on the Swedish Gospels*

#### FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

LUKE 13:1-5

*The Text and Its Central Thought.*—The phrase "at that season" (v. 1) gives the occasion for the incident of the text. Jesus had been talking about the threatening signs of the times and urging the people to repent and to make their peace with God. Jesus had rebuked the people for their failure to discern the signs of the times that foretold the terrible future impending on that doomed land.

As Jesus was talking, some told Him of the bloody fray in the Temple courts. Apparently the reporters of this incident considered these Galileans to have been particularly gross sinners. In their judgment these Galileans experienced the due reward of their deeds. By comparison they considered themselves to be holier people.

In contrast to their judgment, Jesus states God's judgment. What happened to them, He tells them, will soon be the doom of the whole nation unless a great change takes place in their lives. To substantiate His statement of God's judgment, Jesus cites the example of the eighteen on whom the tower of Siloam fell. These were people of Jerusalem, not despised Galileans, and no more wicked than the rest of the citizens of that city.

We may state the central thought of the text thus: Men are too ready, then as now, to give way to the unloving error of looking at individual misfortune as the consequence of individual crime. Such human uncharitable judgments the Lord bitterly condemns. At the same time He declares that these misfortunes are in God's judgment a call to everyone to repent. On the basis of this thought we may call attention to (1) the contrast between man's judgment and God's judgment; (2) the cause and purpose of misfortune; (3) God's call to repentance.

*The Day and Its Theme.*—The Swedish lectionary suggests as the theme for the day "The Judgment of Men and of God." The Gospel for the day speaks of judging and contains the memorable words of Jesus: "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" The Epistle

supplies information regarding misfortunes and disasters in that it points out that the whole world has been subjected to vanity, and therefore to disasters, because of man's sin. The Introit presents the confidence of the child of God in the midst of misfortune.

*The Goal and Purpose of the Sermon.*—To lead the hearer to avoid uncharitable judgments when misfortunes befall another, but rather to view the misfortune as a personal call to repentance.

*Sin and Its Fruit to Be Diagnosed and Remedied.*—The text points to many sins common in the lives of people, such as uncharitable judging, concluding that people are special sinners because of their misfortunes, lack of personal repentance and changing our ways of thinking as a nation and as Christian citizens, failure to heed the signs of the times and to see that calamities (auto accidents, plane crashes, fires, wars, etc.) are God's call to repentance, the need to re-examine our ways in the field of recreation.

*Opportunities for Explicit Gospel.*—Because of the many applications we can make in the sphere of the Law, we may tend to slight the beautiful Gospel promise held forth in the word of Jesus "Except ye repent." This call to repentance reveals the Savior's desire to save us and holds out the way of escape from impending doom because of our sins. The Savior does not want us to perish. Cf. Also Augsburg Confession XII.

*Illustrations.*—Parallels to the two incidents in the text afford good additional illustrations. The Gospel for the day does the same. Other illustrations are indicated above.

### *Outline*

#### How Do You Use Life's Misfortunes?

- I. Do you use them as an occasion to judge others?
- II. Or do you use them as a call to repentance?
  - A. That is the way Jesus wants you to use them.
  - B. That is the way that brings the blessings of forgiveness and salvation.

Springfield, Ill.

LEWIS C. NIEMOELLER

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## FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

MATT. 16:13-20

*The Text and Its Central Thought.*—Jesus is returning to Galilee with His disciples after the Feast of the Tabernacles. In previous incidents He has seen that the large majority of people are rejecting Him in unbelief. He is now concentrating primarily on the instruction of the Twelve, whom He has chosen to be His disciples and witnesses in all the world. Near Caesarea Philippi Jesus tests the disciples with the question: "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" This query naturally introduces the second: "But whom say ye that I am?"

In answer to the first question the disciples recite the various opinions of the people: Jesus is John the Baptist (Matt. 14:2), Elijah (Mal. 4:5 and John 1:21), Jeremiah (cf. the popular legend in 2 Macc. 2:4-8 and 15:13-16), or one of the prophets. The people find in Jesus only an advance agent for the Messiah, not the Messiah Himself. In answer to the second question Peter gives his great confession. He has the special ability to blurt out what is on his mind, and so he frequently is the spokesman for the disciples. Jesus, true God, asked the question as the "Son of Man" and receives the answer that He, the Son of Man, is the Son of the living God and the Christ. Peter confesses both the person and the office of the Savior. Mark 8:27-30 and Luke 9:18-21 give this incident and confession in abbreviated form.

Jesus praises Peter for this confession and calls him blessed because God worked such faith in him (v. 17). Not flesh and blood (man in natural depravity) nor human reason revealed the truth. God is the active Agent (1 Cor. 12:3; Eph. 1:17).

Many are the comments found on v. 18. The Roman Church uses this passage to support its error that Jesus built His church on the person of Peter. A more valid emphasis is that Jesus means Peter's confession. He is not the "Rock" by nature, but he deserves this title as a confessor of Jesus; and upon him not as a man, but as a confessor, the church shall be built. The first fulfillment of these words came on Pentecost. (Acts 2:14 ff.) Peter has priority only as a witness. He was no firm rock in personal character—least of all when he denied His Savior in the court of the high priest; and again in Antioch where he is shown as a dissembler. (Gal. 2:11 ff.) Jesus Christ is the only Rock upon which the church is to be built (Ps. 89:4, 26, 38, 48; Matt. 7:24 f.; Rom. 9:33; 1 Cor. 3:11 and 10:4; Eph. 2:20; 1 Peter 2:7). Against the church so grounded "the gates of hell shall

not prevail." The church is permanent because God's eternal Spirit is active in saving souls through it. So here Jesus gives the keys of heaven to Peter because of his confession and later to all His Apostles (John 20:23). These keys are the authority to open the kingdom of heaven for an individual because God is at work in him, converting him and keeping him in faith; or to close it because the individual is personally rejecting the true Messiah. Probably because of the public rejection of His Messiahship, Jesus forbids His disciples at this time to openly proclaim Him as Messiah. On Palm Sunday, however, He accepts the plaudits of the crowd which welcomes Him as the Messiah, and on Friday He personally makes a public confession before Pilate (Matt. 27:11). His command for us today is that we testify to Him as the Messiah and openly confess Him and His work (Matt. 28:19,20). A central thought for this text is: True disciples testify to Jesus as the Messiah.

*The Day and Its Theme.*—The propers for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity are chosen to prepare for the Day of St. Peter and St. Paul, which is fixed on June 29. This year the Sunday follows twelve days after. But the unified theme is still true discipleship and witness—an emphasis that can hardly be overworked in our age. The Introit cries out to God, our Help, and emphasizes that when He is known as Light and Salvation, all fear departs. The Collect asks for greater love to God, that we may love Him above all earthly things. The Gradual asks God, our Shield, to behold our lives. The Swedish lections underscore the theme "Discipleship." *Parish Activities* has "Citizenship and Recreation" for the monthly theme. In these general areas there are many opportunities to confess our Savior and witness to Him. Taking the day as a whole, we might have the central thought: "As true disciples we are to confess that Jesus is the Messiah."

*The Goal and Purpose of the Sermon.*—To bring the hearer beyond a loose idea of discipleship to a genuine desire to be a true "apostle" who fearlessly confesses in word and action that Jesus is his Savior.

*Sin and Its Fruits to Be Diagnosed and Remedied.*—The unbelief of the world and the apathy even of Christians rightly to profess Him as God; the notion that Jesus is only a good moral teacher and a fine example; the error that to know about Christ in the mind is enough without witnessing and confessing to others that Jesus alone can open heaven; the mistaken idea of "toleration" and considering one religion as good as another.

*Opportunities for Explicit Gospel.*—Our text gives the opportunity to show Jesus' office as the Messiah in detail. The popular idea of

what the Messiah should do contrasts with God's plan of saving men through the death of His Son on the cross. "Whom do ye say that I am?" is the key question.

*Illustrations.*—Popular desire for the daring and the different; stories of failure to witness to fellow workers or friends; dramatic effect of Jesus' own confession before Pilate; the Biblical examples of fearless discipleship, especially Peter and Paul; direct application to the opportunities to confess and witness in daily life should prove effective.

*Outline*

As True Disciples We Are to Testify  
that Jesus Is the Messiah

- I. Jesus Christ is the Messiah.
  - A. Unbelievers have many false ideas about Jesus.
  - B. God's plan was to send Jesus to save the world.
- II. We should be true disciples.
  - A. We should learn carefully and completely what God's Word says about Jesus the Messiah.
  - B. We should hold firmly to that truth.
- III. We should bear witness of this truth to others.
  - A. Many things attempt to hinder our witness.
  - B. God gives us the opportunities and the power to witness for Him.

Conclusion: Amplify: "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven."

Introduction: Amplify: "What think ye of Christ?"

Mascoutah, Ill.

WILLIAM E. GOERSS

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## THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

MATT. 5:38-42

*The Text and Its Central Thought.*—The Sermon on the Mount is a careful and clear exposition of Christ's ethics, and the verses of our text apply these principles to certain areas of human relations. Christ taught that men think and live differently because God has graciously given them the Kingdom, while human moralists have always urged men to live differently in order to earn the Kingdom. Christ's point of view at once brings a spirit of freedom, consideration, and tenderness into men's lives, and this spirit is evident in the words of our text. Christ did not revoke or deny the *lex talionis* of Ex. 21:24, etc. But instead of limiting His teaching to intricate discussions of casuistic questions of compensations as did the rabbis, Christ explained the true meaning which had always been present in the Old Testament formula (cp. Lev. 19:18). The rabbis had covered up God's real meaning with many legal formulas and explanations and with a thousand specific rules governing men's actions in this area.

The Talmudic system tended to rob God's Old Testament code of all its ethical power and inspiration. Edersheim makes this moving statement about the difference between the Sermon on the Mount and the teachings which he himself had learned from the rabbis: "From his [that is, the Christian's] upbringing in an atmosphere which Christ's Words have filled with heaven's music, he knows not, and cannot know, the nameless feeling which steals over a receptive soul when, in the silence of our moral wilderness, those voices first break on the ear that had never before been awakened to them" (I, 525).

The words of the text are simple and easily understood. It should be kept in mind that "compel" (v. 41) does not refer to a sudden whim of a power-mad tyrant, but to the perfectly proper and orderly right which imperial couriers and soldiers had to draft men on the spot to help them deliver their messages or shoulder their burdens.

In v. 17 Christ denied any intention of breaking the Law. "But I say unto you" means only that Christ is striving to fulfill the Law by "realizing in theory and practice an ideal to which the Old Testament institutions and revelations point, but which they do not adequately express" (*Expositors*, I, 104). The new spirit of Christ's ethic is so strong that though the words are Talmudic, the old wine bags could not hold the new wine. They broke.

Three important cautions must be kept in mind regarding these verses. First, Christ did not give such directions that the evil one

and the loafer (v. 24) might be encouraged in their wicked ways. Nor do these verses teach that a Christian judge may never sentence an evildoer to be punished. Nor are they intended to govern specific problems of conduct, for some of the applications which might justly be drawn from these principles are clearly ruled out of order by other Scripture passages. Compare v. 42 with 2 Thess. 3:7-10. See also John 18:22, 23; Acts 16:35-40; etc.

In short, these verses are a challenging and exhilarating call to a new freedom in moral action. They are an invitation to responsible ethical living whose only motive is the Cross of Christ and whose only boundary is the image of Christ. These verses revolve around the central thought that the new life of the Christian in relation to a cantankerous neighbor reflects the *willingly* resigned spirit of Him who prayed, "Father, forgive them."

*The Day and Its Theme.*—The Sixth Sunday after Trinity begins the second cycle of the Trinity season and directs our attention to the marks and characteristics of those who have been called into the Kingdom of Grace (Sundays 1—5). The Swedish lectionary suggests the neutral topic for the day—"The Law of God." The Collect brings color and direction to the day with the petition that God would increase in us true religion. This would show itself in part in a new spirit of compliance in the Christian's relations with all his neighbors. The Epistle lesson reminds us that we who have been buried with Christ by Baptism into death are now to walk in newness of life, daily crucifying the old selfish, hot-tempered Adam and nourishing the selfless, sweetly yielding new man. The Gospel lesson contains the most salient point for the day in v. 20. Luther remarked on this verse: "What is the better righteousness? This, that work and heart together are pious and directed according to God's Word." The theme can be tied in with the *Parish Activities* theme by seeking to apply Christ's ethic in the fields of citizenship and recreation, but this attempt may prove strained.

*The Goal and Purpose of the Sermon.*—To help Christians to understand why they are compliant to a high degree and to encourage them to practice this one phase of the new life which the Spirit is seeking to create in them.

*Sin and Its Fruits to Be Diagnosed and Remedied.*—A multitude of common attitudes must shrivel before the bright light of Christ's teaching in these verses. Intransigence, selfishness, stubborn insistence upon one's own way, temper, hasty words, our American emphasis upon "standing on your own two feet and making your own way."



Utilitarianism and pragmatism must also be destroyed. The common statement of parents, "I'm going to teach my boy to take care of himself," often means an unchristian inculcation of revenge and striking back.

*Opportunities for Explicit Gospel.*—In Christ we have died unto sin, and sin has no more dominion over us. (Cp. Nygren, *Romans*, pp. 239 ff.) Now let us reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ, our Lord. The treasure of full forgiveness, which removes the burden of sin and permits a fresh start each day.

*Illustrations.*—Christ's prayer on the cross; His reception of the blaspheming malefactor; Stephen's prayer before his death. In contrast note the vengeful spirit which often animated the disciples. 1,000 stories from life, such as the taunts of the man who has been promoted over you because he belonged to his foreman's lodge, the nurse who is forced to work Sundays just because she is Lutheran, etc.

#### *Outline*

Let Us Show Forth Christ's Spirit by Living in Cheerful  
Resignation with All Our Neighbors

#### I. The pattern for Christian living in this area.

##### A. Resist not the evil one.

1. The cheek.
2. The garment.
3. The second mile.
4. Financial assistance.

##### B. The Spirit of Christ.

1. Living and pliable in every situation (within certain clearly defined limits).
2. Our calling to be the salt of the earth.

#### II. The source of power for Christian living.

##### A. Overcoming the world with Christ.

##### B. Proper valuation of our freedom in Christ.

Janesville, Wis.

HERBERT T. MAYER

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## SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

JOHN 13:31, 32

*The Text and Its Central Thought.*—With the constant reference to glory, both of the Son of Man and of God the Father, each in and with the other, there can be no doubt what this text would commend to our consideration. If there is any problem, it seems to be due to the context in which these God-glorifying and Self-glorifying words of Jesus are spoken. Judas had just been sent out of the Upper Room by the word of the Lord: "That thou doest, do quickly" (v.27). There is a brief explanation of what the disciples thought he was going to do, and then comes the rather dramatic notice that the sop had scarcely been swallowed when Judas was on his way. We need to be careful that we are not hung up too long with the deep pathos involved in Judas' departure, especially when the tragedy of it is emphasized by the note that "it was night" (v.30). No sooner had the traitor left to do what he had agreed to do for thirty pieces of silver—just as if his departure had elicited the remark—than Jesus declares: "Now is the Son of Man glorified."

It has been suggested that this indicates primarily supreme relief, as if Jesus could breathe easier now that the atmosphere had been cleared of the traitorous breath. There may be something to that. Every contact of Jesus with Judas indicates Jesus' supreme concern to save the man, as witness His questions in the Garden: "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" and "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" Nor dare we dissociate the departure of Judas from these words of Jesus, because the connectives are altogether too clear. In fact, we really have right here the crux of this entire text: Judas departing to betray Jesus causes Jesus to declare that *now* the Son of Man is glorified. If there is any problem at all, it is in connection with our false ideas of glory. Jesus is glorified when He is actually seen for what He truly is, when He fully accomplishes the purpose of His coming. He has no glory except His glory as Savior. Take away that glory, and everything else of shining brightness is meaningless. Even at His transfiguration, Moses and Elijah speak with Him of the deace that He must accomplish at Jerusalem. He Himself had declared with regard to the purpose of His coming: "Lo, I am come to do Thy will, O My God," and the will of God was the reconciliation of the world. The fact that Jesus literally sent Judas on his way means that the final act of redemption is assured, because the betrayal inaugurates it. Jesus here rejoices because He is about to enter upon His Passion and death. Thereby

He would truly be glorified, and God would be glorified in Him because God through Christ was reconciling the world unto Himself. When we think of the indescribable pain and misery, the cause which the Passion gave the enemies for sneering and jeering at Jesus' claims, and read this interpretation which Jesus Himself puts on it all, we must be truly amazed at the way in which our God through Christ worked the marvels of His mercy. It is beyond our comprehension. But He does work them above and beyond and through the worst and the best that man can do. That is His glory: God sent His Son Jesus to be the Savior of sinners; Judas goes out to betray; the Passion has begun; the end—salvation—is in view: therefore now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. Son of Man is Messiah come from God: glory for Son and for Sender is this, that God can give eternal life to sinners through Jesus Christ, our Lord (Rom. 6:23—the Epistle for the day).

*The Day and Its Theme.*—Rom. 6:19-23 shows us as free from sin, the result of the Son of Man's being glorified, and Mark 8:1-9 presents the feeding of the four thousand, a manifestation of the compassion of the Son of Man, who had power to do such wonders. Our Gospel ties them together as it gives us Jesus' interpretation of what His and God's being glorified in each other really means. His compassion finally brought Him to His death, the glorification of God and Himself, because it is the sinner's salvation. Both the Introit and the Gradual give us reason for joy as we behold the Son of Man being glorified. Citizenship and Recreation is the basic monthly topic of *Parish Activities*. It seems difficult to tie in, unless we find a warning in Judas and thus let ourselves be guided in these areas by what glorified the Son of Man. We could never do anything that would besmirch His glory or deny our salvation.

*The Goal and Purpose of the Sermon.*—That the hearer learn of Jesus Himself what is His true glory, lest by our misemphasis we look for a glory that is not His and thus not true glory. See Him as your Savior from your sins, or you do not know His glory at all.

*Sin and Its Fruits, to Be Diagnosed and Remedied.*—Especially today, with the tremendous emphasis in modern revivals, we must ever recognize that Jesus' sole glory and God's single glory in Jesus is this, that He saved us from our sins; not to make us happy, not to provide escape from the H-bomb, not power through positive thinking, but salvation from sin. Our own profession of faith can easily become unbelief and our confession to being Christian can be our sin unless we know what Jesus meant for us when He said:

"Now is the Son of Man glorified." "Neither is there salvation in any other, etc." Nor does He have any other glory.

*Opportunities for Explicit Gospel.*—Look at your sins one way, and they shame God because they show rebellion against Him, an essential denial of His Being. Look at them as forgiven in the Son of Man and God so loving you in the Son of Man, and God and Christ are glorified, because you believe the unbelievable, you trust for salvation in the just God.

*Illustration.*—Judas slinking out into the night even as we would slink from God because of our sin; Judas should have had the heart to stay. The rest of the disciples saw the events of the immediate future as the most shameful thing that could have occurred in the life of the Master; by His love and self-giving Jesus transformed it into the highest glory of God through Himself. "My thoughts are not your thoughts," etc.; also, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

### *Outline*

#### Now Is the Son of Man Glorified

- I. When we would think Him utterly shamed.
  - A. Judas goes out to betray (that he should even be able).
  - B. It involves the entire bloody and shameful Passion.
- II. When God is glorified in Him.
  - A. Not by majestic works of magnificent power (as we like).
  - B. In humble submission to the will of God (as we need).
- III. When all the evidence is in (v. 32).
  - A. The resurrection and the ascent into heaven (hence the future tenses of v. 32 and the expression of certainty by Jesus of the outcome of the will of God).
  - B. The Name above every name (Phil. 2:9-11).

Conclusion: Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior from sin, and you acknowledge His glory now even as all men one day must. Thus we also emphasize the "now" of the theme.

Minneapolis, Minn.

WILLIAM A. BUEGE

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## EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

MATT. 7:22-29

*The Text and Its Central Thought.*—Many people imagine they have a connection with Christ which does not exist in reality. It is eternally important to have a true connection with Christ by doing His will. This "doing" includes contrition and faith, which alone make possible the works which please God. The central thought of the text is that the only solid foundation for life is the rock of Christ and His truth. Every other foundation is sure to falter. V.22: On Judgment Day the false prophets will claim to have represented Christ when they called on His name and did mighty works in His name. V.23: However, Christ knows false prophets, and He knows that they are not His own. Consequently, "I never knew you," that is, I never acknowledged you. Christ and His Word are the final Judge of all false prophets, who come in the sheep's clothing of apparent, not real, representation of Him. Our eternal destiny depends on hearing and doing the will of Christ, not the will of pseudo-ambassadors. The most fatal work of evil is to pervert the Lord's Word in the Lord's own name and lead others into the same perversion. V.24: This verse begins a conclusion to the whole Sermon on the Mount, but it also has a special connection with the verses immediately preceding it, as the Swedish and Standard Gospels for today would indicate. The hearing and doing of Christ's words is not outward work-righteousness, but it is the whole life of faith beginning with repentance and proceeding to a complete trust in the divine word and a total life of surrender and obedience. It is reasonable and sensible to live this life of faith founded on the Rock of Jesus Christ, just as it is reasonable and sensible to build a house on a solid place. V.25: Such a life and such a house will not fall when the storms come. There are many storms in life, but the final all-decisive storm is death itself. Even then the lives built on Christ will not fall. V.26: But the very opposite is true of those who would build their lives on the sand sites peddled by the false-prophet real estate agents. Some of their poor foundation ground is indicated in the outline. V.27: When the tempest of death hits a false faith or a false philosophy of life, there is a resounding crash of wreck and ruin. With this dramatic warning the sermon closes. V.28: The effect was astounding. Jesus never left the impression that His was a human doctrine. He brought the eternal Word. His hearers sensed His authority. His was not the dry dullness of "their scribes," but the eternal immutable Word of God. He was not concerned with memorized

literalism and repetitious ceremonialism but with truth. Some of the chaff in the pulpit "talks" and "meditations" today is akin to the oratory of the scribes. Jesus was forthright and positive in preaching the truth of God. We do well to follow His example.

*The Day and Its Theme.*—The topic of the day is "Error." In the Introit we praise God, whose right hand is full of righteousness. He is never in error. In the Collect we ask for the Spirit to do right things and live according to His will. The implication is that we would seek God's help in turning from falsehood. The Epistle stresses the results of the new life in Christ, which makes us sons of God and heirs of glory. The Gospel overlaps the text and indicates that errorists can be identified by their fruits (their doctrine).

The monthly theme "Citizenship and Recreation" doesn't tie as readily to the text as some monthly emphases, but reference might be made to the need for practicing an errorless Christianity in our lives as citizens and in our activity while on vacations. To do otherwise moves us over on sandy soil.

*The Goal and Purpose of the Sermon.*—The sermon should point to the deceptiveness of false prophets, the foolishness and sinfulness of building a life on error, and the wisdom of building on Christ the solid Rock. It must be emphasized that this life in Christ is not an activity of our mind, will, and ability; but the power of God in us.

*Sin Diagnosed.*—This text hits hard at the sin of error in doctrine and life. We are too prone to excuse error as a mere human mistake, especially if one is sincere. God's Word knows no such excuse for the damnable mistake of building on anything other than Christ.

*Opportunities for Explicit Gospel.*—It is only the power of the Gospel that makes men wise and leads them to truth and salvation. The Gospel as well as the Law is the foundation of a sermon on this text; just as it is the foundation of the new life in Christ Jesus, the Savior. The Law may lead one to know his error, but only the Gospel can overpower it.

*Illustrations.*—We want truth in religion, as we want truth in currency, truth in material value, truth in medicine. We do not want counterfeit money, cheap and imitation materials, or quack medicines. Why should we accept anything short of that which is true and genuine when the eternal welfare of the soul is at stake?

Satan's first lie was a half-truth. He still covers the poison of error with a sugar-coating of truth.

*Outline*

## Build Your Life on Truth in Christ

- I. Beware of false prophets (vv. 22, 23).
  - A. Not all who call "Lord, Lord" are united with Christ.
  - B. The Word decides who is a true prophet. Deut. 13:1-3; Gal. 1:9.
  - C. Christ does not know (acknowledge as His) those who are not true prophets.
- II. The folly of building on sand sites (vv. 26, 27).
  - A. The easy way is not always the best.
  - B. Typical sand sites are: mere hearing without doing, work-righteousness without repentance, Modernism, Romanism, etc.
  - C. A life built apart from the rock of Christ's Word ends in destruction.
- III. The wisdom of building on Christ's Word (vv. 24, 25).
  - A. We hear and do Christ's Word not by natural power, but by the power of the Spirit in the Word.
  - B. Such a life, built on hearing and doing, weathers all storms, even death.
  - C. The authority of Christ's Word has stood for centuries to the amazement of men. It endures forever (vv. 28, 29).

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GEORGE H. SOMMERMEYER