**One Solitary Life**

*Adapted from Dr James Allan Francis (1926)*

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. Then for three years He was an itinerant preacher.

He never owned a home. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put His foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself...

While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. While He was dying His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth – His coat. When He was dead, He was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen long centuries have come and gone, and today He is a centerpiece of the human race and leader of the column of progress.

I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built; all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life.

## Hating the Prophet

Edited from H. E. Phillips

All through the history of man in sin, the word of God has always had two effects upon man: it makes him repent and turn to righteousness, or it makes him hate the message and the prophet. When Ahab was king of Israel, he followed a very wicked course and gathered about him many false prophets who would prophesy as he desired. This is very much like religious conditions in the world today. The preacher who dares to speak what God has revealed on all matters, especially when it condemns the general practice of people, becomes the object of hate.

*"And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, there is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so"* (1 Kings 22:8).

Ahab was not the last man to hate a prophet because he did not speak good concerning him. This attitude was characteristic of Israel all through their history. Stephen concluded his discussion with the Jews in the Synagogue with these words: "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers" (Acts 7:52). For these words Stephen was killed by the mob.

The setting of the statement in 1 Kings 22 shows that the king of Israel had designs against another king and wanted the help of Jehoshaphat in the effort. He already had the death sentence passed against him by Elijah because of his crime of greed and murder. His evil wife, Jezebel, had developed a plan which he carried out to have Naboth killed because he wanted his vineyard. When Elijah told Ahab that "in the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs like thy blood, even thine" (1 Kings 21:19). Ahab replied to Elijah: "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?"

Paul inquired of the Galatians, "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Gal. 4:16).

Why is it that a man can be corrected -- told the truth -- about many other matters, but makes you his eternal enemy for telling him the truth about God's word? A stranger can be stopped on the street and told that he is going into danger if he keeps on in the direction he is going, and he will thank you and take another course. But your best friend can be sinning against God and if you tell him about it he will, in many cases, become your enemy.

Maybe the answer to this strange behavior lies in the nature of religion itself, and in the fact that most people do not like to be considered ignorant of such important matters. Most people think of religion as a thing so personal that it should not be changed. They think of it as a sort of heritage that belongs to their ancestors. For this reason it is an insult to tell them that they are wrong.

Men do not like to appear uninformed in the basic and important matters of life and eternity, but the terrible truth is that the great majority of this age are ignorant. To try to tell one the truth when he considers himself informed enough to know, it is an insult.

But neither of these reasons appear in the case of Ahab's hate for Micaiah. It was a clear case of a man wanting to do a thing but not wanting to reap the consequences. He wanted to be told that he would be victorious in spite of the fact that he knew a prophet had told him he would die. Those today who want to hear "good" about themselves when they are doing those things that are wrong are in the same class with this evil king.

It will be observed that the truth was not changed because several hundred prophets spoke "good" of the king, nor was it changed because the king hated the prophet and had him put in prison. It is the same today. The truth remains the truth whether we believe it or not, and even if we hate the preacher. It is a sad fact that some churches have the reputation of changing preachers repeatedly after a period of time, often almost identical in length, because he comes to know the needs of that church and addresses them. Though they change the messenger, the message remains unchanged and equally indicting. No matter the reaction, the truth is still the truth and will be the basis of our eternal judgment (Jn. 12:48; 2 Tim. 2:11-13).