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Meeting of HALTON RURAL SOFTBALL LEAGUE will be held at the

COURT HOUSE, MILTON

on WEDNESDAY, MAY 17TH at 8.30 D.S.T.

All Clubs wishing to play in this group please submit your entry to the Secretary.

Schedule will be drawn with consideration only for entries received on or before above date

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The Sunday School Lesson

SUNDAY, MAY 14th, 1950

GOD'S FORGIVING LOVE Exposition.—1. Jehovah's Persistent Love, 11:14, 8-11.

Verse 1 presents to us God's love for Israel as a nation in the childhood of the nation. When Israel was a child, just beginning to be a nation in Egypt, God loved him (Deut. 7:7; Jer. 2:2; Mal. 1:2). Because of His great love to Israel, He called them out of Egypt, the land of bondage, into Canaan, the land of liberty, flowing with milk and honey. This laid Israel under peculiar obligations of loyalty and fidelity to God, but not under such obligations as we are laid today because of the greater redemption that God has provided for us through the death of His Son. God here calls Israel "My son" (Ex. 4:22), but in a far higher sense have we a right to call ourselves "sons of God" (1 Jno. 3:1, 2). What is as a nation is applied by Matthew here stated by the prophet of Israel to Him who alone fully realized God's purpose in Israel, Him in whom all Israel was really summed up. Him who was in the fullest and truest sense God's Son. So the full significance of the prophecy was realized in the Lord Jesus and Him alone (Matt. 2:15). In v. 2 we have Israel's wandering set in contrast with God's redeeming love. Israel's whole history was a history of going after false gods (1 Sam. 8:7-9; 2 Ki. 17:13-15; Cron. 36:15, 16; N eh. 9:30; Isa. 30:9-14; Zech. 1:4; 7:11; Ac. 7:51; Hos. 2:13; Jud. 2:13, 3:7). Verse 3 sets over against the persistent backsliding of Israel the tender and persistent love of Jehovah to Israel. Jehovah is represented as a father teaching Israel to walk, carrying him in His arms and healing him (Ex. 19:14; Deut. 1:31; 32:10-12).

So God deals with the believer today, but all the while Israel "knew not" what Jehovah was doing for him, and the average believer today does not recognize what God is doing for him. In v. 4 Jehovah represents Himself as drawing Israel with bands of love. He draws us with a mightier band of love revealed in the crucifixion of our Lord in our place (Jno. 12:32; 2 Chron. 5:14). He also reveals Himself as delivering Israel from the grievous yoke that was upon him and laying food before them, so our Lord delivers us from our yoke (Matt. 11:28-30) and lays abundant food before us. There is wonderful tenderness in the opening words of v. 8. Israel would persist in backsliding, but still the love of God could not let him go (Jer. 9:7; Lam. 3:33). These words remind us of the words of our Lord Jesus regarding Jerusalem in its persistent rejection of Himself (Matt. 23:27; Luke 19:41, 42). God's attitude toward the persistent backslider today is just the same; wander as far as often as we will, God's love cannot and will not give us up. Israel's persistent backsliding made it necessary that he be sternly dealt with as with Admah, Zebaim and the other cities of the plain (v. 8, cf. Gen. 14:8; 19:24, 25; Deut. 29:23). But God in His great love, in spite of their persistent disloyalty and backsliding, recoiled from punishing them as they deserved. He felt that He could not make them as Admah, etc. His heart was turned within Him. His compassions were kindled.

In v. 9 we have the representation of the passionate character of the love of God for Israel. He says, "I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger; I will not return to destroy Ephraim" (ch.14:4; Ex. 32:10-14; Isa. 48:9; Jer. 30: 11; Ezek. 20:8, 9, 13, 14, 21, 23). All of Israel's hope and all of our hope is in God; it is because of what God is and not because of what we are that we are not utterly destroyed. We deserve to be, but God is God and not man and His purposes of love and redemption He will carry out in spite of what we may be or do (Rom. 11:28, 29). In vs. 10, 11 we have a prediction of the repentance of Israel and of their restoration in spite of their persistent backsliding. God declares that ultimately "They shall walk after Jehovah" (Rom. 11:26). The mighty voice of Jehovah will be the means by which they are brought to repentance and they shall come trembling from the west and out of Egypt and out of the land of Assyria. Wherever Israel is scattered they shall be discovered and brought back (Isa. 11:11). They shall be restored to their own land and made to dwell in their own houses (v. 11, cf. Isa. 11:11, 12; Ezek. 36:24; 37:21; Zeph. 3:19, 20; Ezek. 37:19, 22, 23, 24; 36:25-27; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:33-38).

25-27; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:33-38).
II. Backslidings Healed, 14:4-9.
What a gracious promise verse 4 contains. What heavenly music it is to the backslider's heart. How many a backslider I have seen come back to God in response to these tender words. Israel's backsliding had been grievous, persistent, stubborn, monstrous, yet Jehovah cried, "Return unto Jehovah thy God." On the one condition of full and frank confession, there would be complete healing and unstinted love. Such is ever God's attitude toward the backslider (Jer. 3:13-14, 22). It is a wondrous privilege to have God's anger "turned away." It is a privilege open to every sinner and the condition is plain (vs. 1, 2). Beauty strength, growth, fruitage await the penitent backslider (vs. 5-8). Some of the fairest lives today are the lives of those who were once farthest from God. They do indeed "blossom as the lily" (R. V.).

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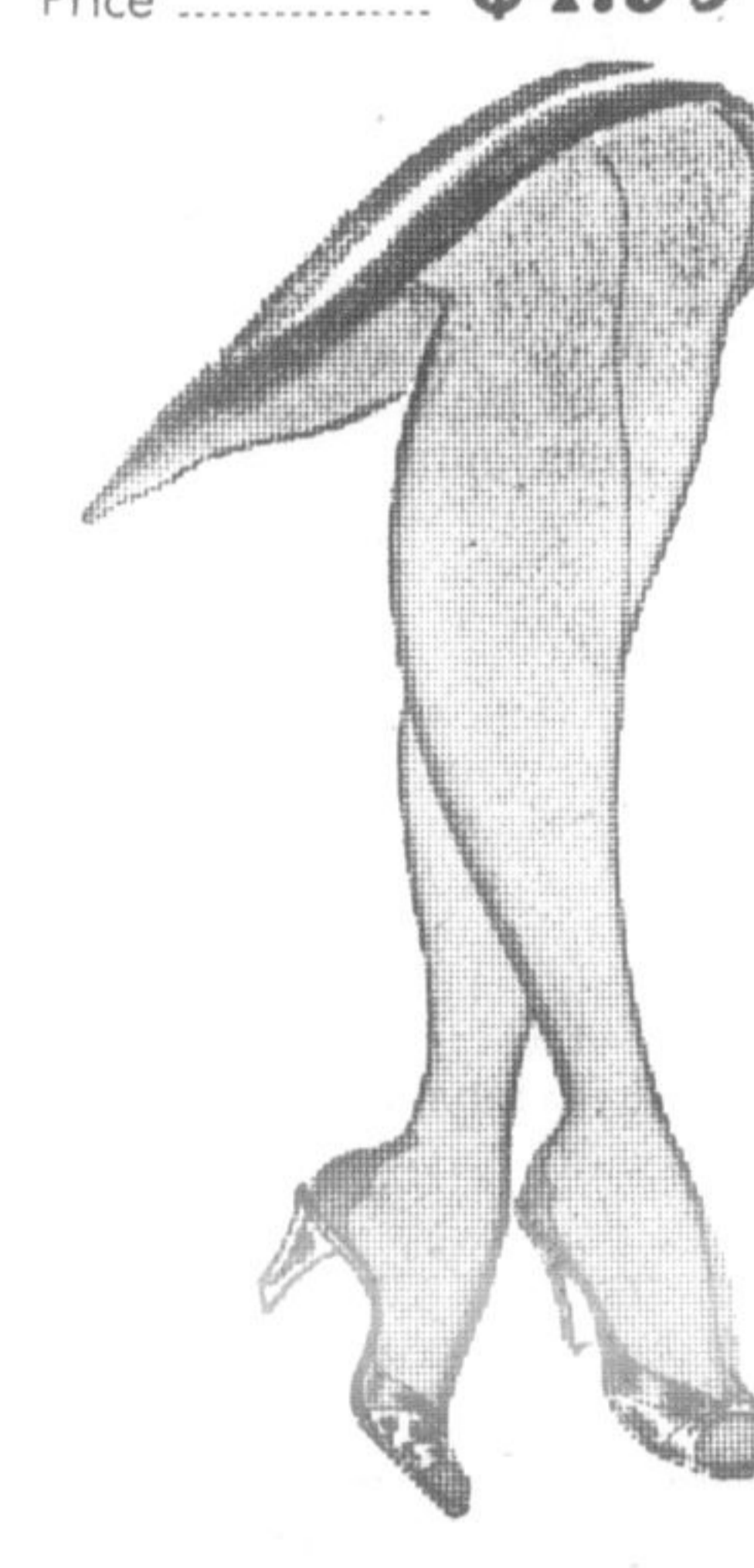
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