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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

by Rev. R. C. Todd

JUDAH'S LAST DAYS

LESSON . . . 2 Kings 23:31 to 24:7; Jer. Chap. 36

Last week's lesson showed us how Judah's King Josiah acted when the book of the law was discovered in the Temple and brought to him. The reaction brought reform — reform, however, which lasted only during Josiah's life-time. Josiah fell fighting against the Egyptians in 608 B.C. His son, Jehoiakim, tried to continue the struggle for independence, but was taken prisoner by the Egyptians. He was succeeded on the throne by Jehoiakim. Egypt's dominance lasted only for a short time, for Babylon defeated her decisively in 605. Judah enjoyed several years of independence, but in 601, Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon, sent armies, into Palestine and Jehoiakim became subject to him for three years. At the end of this time Jehoiakim rebelled. Nebuchadnezzar was not able immediately to send his regular troops to subdue rebellious Judah, so he employed bands of Marauders from neighbouring states to harass her. Before Nebuchadnezzar arrived with a regular army, Jehoiakim died.

During this last period of Judah's existence, a prophet named Jeremiah exposed the sins of his country, pronounced God's judgment upon her, and proclaimed her destruction at the hands of Babylon. His predictions, as well as including the des-

truction of the nation, told as well of the death of the King, and the desecration of his body. The prophecies were written down by Jeremiah's friend and amanuensis, Baruch. The king, on learning what was in the book, burned it, and ordered the arrest of Jeremiah and Baruch. The two men went into hiding, and produced a new and enlarged edition of the prophecies.

Jeremiah was not a seditious traitor. He was a man who loved his country and wept over the corruption which was preparing her for the slaughter. His message was not purely negative; it was meant as the preaching of the Word of God. He exposed his country's sins mercilessly, but he did it always in the hope that she might turn from them and be forgiven by God. Apparently the nation preferred to turn a blind eye to the reality of the peril pointed out by Jeremiah. Jeremiah ran up against a not uncommon type of national complacency; the feeling that, "it can't happen to us!" It seemed unthinkable that the chosen people of God should be doomed to suffer annihilation at the hands of a foreign foe. When such an opinion was uttered, it was sure to be regarded by some as foolish, and by others as reasonable.

The book of the law, about which last week's lesson was centred, was still regarded as the Word of God. It had become an object of tremendous reverence. Jeremiah's preaching was based upon it. There is deep significance in the fact that the general pronouncements and judgments found

in a hallowed book were one thing, and the audacious preaching of Jeremiah another. Deuteronomy was received as the recorded Word of God. Jeremiah's message was the living preaching of that Word. As a man of flesh and blood, possessed of no recognized authority, he had to bear the brunt of criticism from his contemporaries when he opened his mouth to protest in the name of God, against the evils which were corrupting his country. It was his burden-some duty to apply the Word of God to his times, to show the application of what the law and the prophets had always taught, in his own age. Jeremiah was a sensitive man who shrank from the odium he incurred through his preaching. Moreover he pitied the people and was consumed with distress at the thought of the impending disaster. Yet it was his duty to preach the Word of God to his time, and he faithfully performed that duty even at the expense of persecution.

The greatest need of our times is to come to grips with the Word of God. There is more involved in this, however, than just reading the recorded Word of God and instituting reforms in worship as Josiah did. Respect for the Bible as a book, does not in itself produce any significant reforms. Somebody has to apply what Scripture teaches; somebody has to bring the point of it, home to our times. The Word of God has to be preached in a living and prophetic way, and that living Word has to be heard. And that is the function of the preacher — to show men what the gospel really means for this present age. When this is done, prejudices are sometimes outraged, pride is hurt, feelings are injured; yet at the same time if such preaching be given and received in the right spirit, men will be pointed to the only source of help and salvation.

This is the challenging aspect of the Church's mission in the world. Nobody is concerned when the Church confines itself to pious generalities. But let somebody speak the Word of God as it applies to the present-day character of Canadian politics, or international politics, or denounce specific racial or nationalistic prejudices, such as Canada's shameful treatment of native-born Canadian citizens of Japanese origin; let someone tell employers that they are unjust to their workers, or tell strikers that they ought not to resort to violence; let somebody tell Canadian manufacturers that they are bleeding the nation to death with high prices, thereby contravening the law of God — and then the fight is on. Then preaching becomes direct and specific; it stirs up opposition and resentment. In Jeremiah's day, they burned the preacher's writings; in Luther's day they burned the preacher; today, they burn the preacher's reputation by calling him a "Red."

But somebody has to assume the burden of bringing the Word of God home to men in the actual situations of modern life. The word of God is a living Word that must be heard in a concrete historical situation. A book with the reputation of the Bible, enjoys at least lip-respect for what it says. And yet when the things which it says were said within an historical situation, as were the words of Jeremiah, and the words of Jesus, those who said them were bitterly hated and what they said was resented to the point of persecution and death. So it is that the very human and imperfect men whose task it is to interpret the Bible for our day, may be despised, and their message resented. But these risks must be borne by those appointed to preach the living Word of God in the Church. On occasion they will of course, be in error; they are not infallible. The one thing that they dare not do, however, is to draw back from the work of making God's Word clear, so far as they are able, to the people for whose spiritual care they are responsible.

The preaching of the living God is not merely censorious. Like Jeremiah's preaching it is meant to lead men to repentance, to persuade them to seek the pardon of their sins, and the healing of their spiritual sickness in the Lord of all grace. Such preaching should be so understood, so received, and therefore welcomed by the people of the Christian Church. All who acknowledge that they are responsible to God, should be prepared to hear something specific about wherein their responsibility lies. And should welcome it, when they hear it, as the Living Word of God. All who recognize that as men they stand under God's judgment, must be ready to learn their errors and their faults, even from fallible human lips, that turning to God, they may be delivered from them. Warnings of the judgment of God should be acceptable to those who know their own frailty and fallibility; and no man should shrink from hearing

GARAGE OPERATORS SEE FILMS ON FORD PRODUCTION

Representatives of the Mercury division of the Ford Motor Company attended the June meeting of Halton Garage Operators and showed films of the building of Ford cars in the Windsor plant of the company. The meeting was held on Monday, June 2nd in the Milton Oddfellows Hall, with president Red Waumsley in charge.

A short business session was held, but as all the business could not be transacted in the limited time available, several items were held over until the directors' meeting on June 16th. The Milton members, who sponsored the meeting, served coffee, pie and ice-cream to the seventy members and their staffs present.

IN MEMORIAM

Toronto, June 11 (JWE) In the Greasy Gus Dining-Salon, a little four-stooler, at the corner of Bloor and Bay Streets, on May 28, the first anniversary of the birth of the Georgetown Mirror, a simple but impressive commemoration ceremony was held by two former associates on that dear departed journal.

Heedless of the roaring traffic surging past outside, the two men, one the former editor, the other, the man who turned the crank on the mimeograph machine, sat silently at attention.

Then in solemn sequence they lowered their stools to half mast and, while their namings sagged sadly on the counter, a two-minute silence was observed by the juke box.

At length the two cranked themselves up to full height, swivelled about to face the nearest newsstand and, raising their dixie cups in final tribute drank a toast to the 4-week old newspaper which had been carried off in its infancy by a sudden attack of the subscribers.

(Editor's note: Attached to this bear-stained missive we found the following touching tribute written especially for the occasion by Jack Grimshaw, poet laureate of the Toronto Evening Telegram.)

"Twas twelvemonth ago this very day,
That our loving tabloid passed away,
Upon its tombstone cold and gray;
The Mirror—died in June; hatched in May.

of his sins or those of his nation, in as much as there is forgiveness for these sins in Jesus Christ. The Word of God does not necessarily confirm us in what we already think and feel. Rather does it challenge contemporary opinions and attitudes. The Word of God from human lips seems like a paradox. It is the paradox of the Incarnation. As St. Paul said: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels."

While it is true that the direct preaching of God's Word rouses hostility, at the same time the Church is criticized if its preachings fail to speak to the historical situation. There is a desire to hear the Living Word of God; but human nature prefers that it be the Word of God for somebody else, and for some other nation. Had Jeremiah spoken of the judgment of God upon Babylon alone, he would have been very popular. Today we would prefer to hear the Word of God for our neighbour rather than for ourselves; we would prefer to hear the word of God for Russia rather than the Word of God for Canada and the British Empire. But the preference of human beings does not determine the message of the Church of Christ. How do we hear the Living Word of God? Do we receive it joyfully and humbly and does it stir us to repentance? Or does it arouse resentment and hatred? If the latter then we may be sure that we are possessed by the same evil spirit which possessed those who crucified the Son of God. The judgment is: "He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Today we Live in a Greater Canada



Ours Today—
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of a hundred million men!

Today Canada is producing far more electrical power than ever. Water power installations are 25% greater than before the war! Now they total over 10 million h.p.—furnishing energy equal to that of more than 100,000,000 workers.

Our development of that power—in which we rank second in the world—made it possible for us to become one of the most important of manufacturing countries, with vastly increased opportunities in every field of activity.

Yet our present installations, tremendous as they are, represent only 20% of our recorded resources!

With long distance transmission of electricity, water power became a dominant influence on Canadian development. The 18-mile line between St. Narcisse and Three Rivers in 1897 was the first high-tension transmission line in the British Empire.

After the turn of the century the advance was rapid. Greatest industrial user of electrical power was pulp and paper. Water power was the basis of its tremendous development as it became Canada's greatest peace-time industry.

With the war, aluminum became the biggest user, taking one-quarter of all electric energy generated in Canada. Greatest wartime development was mighty Shipshaw on the Saguenay, where the power generated is greater than that at Boulder Dam.

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