

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Lesson for December 4
Golden Text.—He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully.—Jer. 23:28
Approach to the Lesson
 Luther rightly said, "Satan is God's ape." He works by imitation. Whenever God is working in power, the Devil endeavors to confuse the minds of men by false signs and wonders. It was so in Egypt when the magicians in Pharaoh's court seemed at first to duplicate all the miracles that Moses wrought, but when the dust turned to living insects at the command of Moses, the magicians failed to imitate it, for only God can bring life out of death. All down through the ages, in every dispensation, the archdeceiver has been engaged in this business of seeking to thwart the divine purpose by misleading men who are credulous enough to be taken by

him captives at his will. Wherever God's servants are engaged in sowing the seed of the Word, the agents of the evil one are found scattering the tares among the wheat.
 So in Jeremiah's day the Devil raised up false prophets to attempt to offset the ministry of divinely inspired seers. These deceivers prophesied of peace and safety at a time when judgment was about to fall on Judah and Jerusalem because of the manifold sins of the people, who had turned away from the true God and had put their abominable idols in His place. These self-appointed and demon-controlled emissaries endeavored to destroy the entire effect of Jeremiah's call to repentance by impugning his motives, declaring him to be an enemy to the nation, because the effect of his testimony tended to destroy the morale of the defenders of Jerusalem. So they sought to destroy Jeremiah and would have succeeded in their

nefarious purpose had it not been for the special protection of Jehovah Himself. Against all of these foes of the truth and holiness Jeremiah stood firmly, although at times sorely tried by the slanders and persecution to which he was exposed. He lived to see all the false prophets discredited, as his own faithful words were fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of Judah.
The Historical Setting
 Throughout all the years of his long and faithful prophetic ministry Jeremiah had to endure the bitter enmity and scorn of those who pretended to be divinely commissioned, but who simply gave forth their own dreams or unreliable predictions as though they were the words of Jehovah. Not only in the land of Palestine, but even among those already carried as captives to Babylon, these false prophets arose, declaring that the Captivity was shortly to come to an end and that Judah would be triumphant over all her foes. Against these carnal optimists some of Jeremiah's strongest diatribes were directed.
Verse by Verse
 Jer. 23:16—"Hearken not unto the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain." Men delight in honeyed words. Hence Satan's counterfeit ministers give forth that which bolsters unbelievers up in their pride and encourages them to hope that all is well when in reality, all is wrong with them. The true prophet of Jehovah seeks to bring men to face their true condition and thus to turn to God in repentance.
 Verse 21—"I have not sent these prophets." Every true servant of God is divinely called, as Jeremiah himself was (1:4-10). False prophets are self-ordained and responsible to no one. Their messages are of their own devising and with no weight or authority.
 Verse 22—"If they had stood in my counsel." That is, they had entered into the mind of God and proclaimed His Word to the people, "then they should have turned them from their evil way," instead of which they confirmed them in their sin and rebellion. This is ever the result of false teaching.

Verse 23—"A God at hand..... a God afar off?" He is both, for He is omni-present and fills all things (Eph. 1:23). Because of this, nothing is hid from Him. To escape from His all-searching eye is impossible (Psa. 139:7-12). His understanding is infinite (Isa. 40:28).
 Verse 24—"Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him?" Solomon tells us that "the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Prov. 15:3). And we read that "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (2 Chron. 16:9). What folly to try to hide from God!
 Verse 25—"Prophecy lies in my name." It is the height of wickedness to attach the holy name of the Lord to the idle dreamings that carnal men give out as divine unfoldings when they are only speaking out of the imagination of their evil hearts.
 Verse 26—"Prophets that prophesy lies." There is a vast difference between God's inspired Word and the theories of unspiritual men who, though they may vaunt their erudition and charm by their eloquence are only deceiving their credulous followers with empty vaporings from their corrupt minds, destitute of the truth (1 Tim. 6:5).
 Verse 27—"Forgotten my name for Baal." Those who listened to the false prophets had apostatized from Jehovah and become a ready prey to the religion of Baal, that idolatrous system which had ever been the curse of the Israelites when they refused to heed the Word of God spoken by His faithful servants.
 Verse 28—"What is the chaff to the wheat?" Dreams are not to be substituted for the Word. The one may come through the multitude of business (Eccles. 5:3); the other is a revelation from Heaven. This is not to deny that God may speak through dreams, if it be His will; but it is not His usual way. Where we have the written Word, dreams are needless and may be positively misleading. The Word itself is the wheat. Dreams are but as the worthless chaff in comparison.
 Verse 29—"Fire..... and..... ham-

mer." These are two very striking figures of the Word. It is like a fire to destroy what is false, and like a hammer to break the rocky hearts of men and subdue their stubborn wills.
 Verse 30—"The prophets..... steal my words every one from his neighbour." This is not simply a warning against the very common vice of literary plagiarism, though it is often applied that way, but it refers to robbing others of the truth of God's Word and substituting man's empty theories in place of it. It is a very solemn thing indeed to trifle with that which has been divinely revealed and merits our most careful consideration and acceptance.
 Verse 31—"The prophets..... that use their tongues, and say, He saith." The judgment of God is against those who substitute their own thoughts for God's truth and profess to have His authority for their false and unholy declarations, whereby they grievously mislead their credulous followers.
 Verse 32—"They shall not profit this people at all." Nothing is spiritually edifying that is contrary to the mind of the Lord. Loose principles lead to loose living, whereas holy instruction received in faith culminates in a life of godliness and sobriety. This is why it is so important to distinguish between truth and error and to "buy the truth, and sell it not" (Prov. 23:23). It is not just a question of different opinions of fallible men, but of the fundamental distinction between that which is of God of truth and that which is of Satan, the father of lies.

The Heart of the Lesson
 Faithfulness to God, particularly when one is called to be a public witness to the truth, always involves opposition on the part of the enemies of the Lord. Such will endeavor to hinder and belittle the efforts of God's devoted servants in every possible way. But none should be terrified or turned aside by such enmity. Rather it should be regarded as a challenge to contend the more earnestly for the faith delivered to him. It was so in the case of Jeremiah, who thus became an example for all who know the Lord to follow.

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Large Production Coming in from Mushroom Farm

Built last summer, the Dominion Mushroom Company on the Brock Road at the fifth concession corner is now one-third in production. This interesting Pickering Township project is the largest mushroom farm in the area east of Toronto. Owned by Toronto barrister John Grudeff, K.C., it is operated by Victor J. Urik who has been in the mushroom business for the past 10 years.

In a tall, barn-like building there are four growing houses. Separation of the sections is necessary so that a steady flow of mushroom production can be maintained. By next month all the racks will be filled with rich earth and the plan will be on the way to full production. Overall dimensions are 80 by 78 feet plus a new storage shed now under construction on the east end.

A large heating plant was installed so that if the project gains the success that is expected another wing can be built and the capacity doubled. The location is known to residents of the district as the old Beverly Robinson farm of 100 acres. Mr. Grudeff acquired it a number of years ago.

This new venture in Pickering is of such proportions as to be of wide interest. Already in its unfinished state, it is producing 30 large baskets per week. A ready market is found in Toronto. Retail prices of 65c per pound and up are currently obtained.

After the baskets are picked they are stored in a small room refrigerated at 35 degrees, until shipment can be made.

Six weeks from the time the spawn is planted, some production may be expected. Temperatures of 78 degrees are used at first but this is reduced as the fungi develop. Some degree of control of production may be had by varying temperatures and moisture conditions.

The mushrooms are grown in boxes seven tiers high. Four tiers can be tended and picked from the floor while the upper three are reached from a scaffolding arrangement at eight feet above the floor.

Three varieties are grown here. The Show Whites are most popular for domestic use but restaurants prefer the Gold Cream variety which have more body and meaty texture. The third type is Cream. Mushrooms are graded as No. 1's which are the large ones; 2's which are good quality but show slight defects in formation; and "buttons," which are small, firm and very saleable on the retail market.

Six to nine crops can be grown from one spawn. Out in the yard of this mushroom farm may be seen the usual huge piles of manure which are heating and rotting for future use in the soil. A tractor with hydraulic lift is used for the purpose of turning and piling the manure frequently. Unless treated with care, it might "burn" or fall to mature uniformly throughout.

The mushroom business is fairly constant year-round — except through June, July and August when it shows a distinct falling off. Plants which sell to canneries, may keep up a steady production.

For the owner Mr. Grudeff, mushroom farming is merely another of many interests which extend through law, politics and music and art. He does not look upon it as a hobby but as a business from which very promising things are expected.

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