

The Gospel Witness

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"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Romans 1:16.

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"BOUGHT WITH A PRICE"

-A Sermon by the Pastor, Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, October 4th, 1936

(Stenographically Reported)

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."—I. Corinthians 6:19; 20.

In the immediate context the Holy Spirit by Paul paints a very dark picture of what man is by nature, and warns us that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. To these Corinthians He says, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." He proceeds thereafter to tell them what it really means to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus, to be a Christian according to the standards of the Word of God.

What is it to be a Christian? What strange conceptions people have of what God requires of those who profess His name! Here it is gathered up in a very few words: "Ye are not your own: for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

I shall endeavour this evening, as the Lord may help me, to show you from the Word of God the standard which the Lord Himself has set up for those who are His people, that we may learn what we ought to be and do if we are to be pleasing to Him.

I.

First, there must be A RECOGNITION OF THE FACT THAT WE ARE NOT OUR OWN. I fear that that conception is very far from the mind of many who profess the name of Christ; but if we are really Christians, we are not our own. We are not the captains of our souls, the masters of our fate. We are the chattels of Another. We have a Master Whom we must obey, a King to Whom we are subject. We are not our own.

We are not our own *as to our bodies*. We are men and women in the flesh; we cannot ignore the require-

ments of our physical nature. But our bodies are really the property of Somebody else. We call them ours: "My hands, my feet, my eyes, my ears." The truth is, we have the right of proprietorship in nothing. We are not our own. Our bodies are not ours to indulge, for the enjoyment of the things of time. They are not ours to use for our own profit and preferment. Our physical powers are not negligible. They are not to be despised nor ignored. But whatever physical potentialities we have, whatever we may be able to accomplish by our bodily prowess, our bodies are not our own. They must be subject to the mastery of Another. They must be absolutely under the dominance of another law than that of our own will. Our bodies are not ours.

Neither are our *minds*, with all their capacities. We have been made for Another. We are owned by Someone else. Our memory, the mind's storehouse: we must be careful to what use it is put. It is not our own to store with things unclean. Our powers of reason, our judgment, our affectional potentialities—they are all the property of Another. Nor is the power of our will our own—

"Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, Thou:
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them Thine."

Whatever the qualities of the mind, whether small or great, whether potential and undeveloped, or trained and disciplined to the highest degree, our minds are not ours. We are not our own.

Neither are our spirits our own. We are not all body; we are not all mind. We have been made with a capacity for spiritual things, for a divine Occupant. These complex natures of ours are as a three-storied palace, a great mansion of many rooms. You have passed the empty

palace on the hill? It cost much money. I do not know what it is like on the inside, but it is very elaborate in its design outside. But it is a poor shack compared with mansoul, with all its capacities and furnishings; for when He had made the sun and stars, when He had created this world and furnished it for human habitation, God accomplished His greatest work in the creation of man in His own image and likeness. It is a tremendous truth, a truth that apart from the revelation of God in Christ, we should never have dreamed, that the thing upon earth that is likeliest to God is a human being: a spirit in which God may dwell, a mind with all its—I do not say infinite, but inestimable capacity, a body with all its splendid powers—for they are splendid; all that we are and have is the property of Someone else. "Ye are not your own."

It means that *our collective powers of achievement*, whatever they may be, what you and I are able to do, when all the powers of our manhood and womanhood are duly regimented, properly organized, rightly directed—what we may be able to do in God's world: all these powers considered singly, or collectively in their totality, belong to Someone else: they are not ours. Men are disposed to boast of their power of accomplishment. But, liken yourself to what you will, the great estate which may be cultivated, which may be vastly fruitful and useful—but it is not your own.

I have marvelled sometimes as I have looked at some great machine, the engines of an ocean-liner, for instance. I have seen some large ones, or perhaps the machines in a great newspaper office, bewilderingly intricate turning out sheets by the million. They are the creations of a human intellect. Some man made them. Go through the ancient cities,—think of that place in Spain, the Alcazar, I do not know whether anybody in our day could build a place like that. They thought they had destroyed it, yet they discovered they had destroyed but comparatively few of the sixteen or seventeen hundred besieged there. The Word tells us that "every house is builded by some man". The great cities, the great cathedrals, the mighty works of art, are all the product of a human mind and hand. But the power to do these things, the collective, total ability of a human soul, we do not own: it is not our own.

Our time is not our own. If you were to drop into some place of employment to-morrow, where faithful men are working, men who are being paid for their labour, and who put conscience into the service they render, and you were to try to engage them in conversation, in idle talk, they would say, "Excuse me, sir, but I have no time to talk. I cannot stop to talk to you now." "Why not?" "My time is not my own. It belongs to another. I have no time for any service but my employer's." Our time is not our own. How many people are looking for "pas-times"! And how carelessly they throw their time away! But we have no time to waste, no time to "pass". Indeed, we are admonished to "redeem the time", to "buy it up." We have not many hours, not many days and years at the best. And what we have, what we call our own, is not ours at all. Our time may not legitimately be devoted to our own pleasure or profit, if we are Christians.

Our property is not our own. "Yes it is. I have a house; it is registered in my name." But that makes no difference. The Lord in His Word speaks of some who assume this attitude: "Their inward thought is, that

their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names", and know not that "the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever." You do not own anything. "But I do." You do not, if you are a Christian; you have no right of proprietorship in anything. "My money." You have none if you are a Christian. "That is going too far." No, it is not. That is the scriptural standard. Your body, your spirit, your mind—and the product of it all—belong to Another; is the property of Another; you have no right to use it without reference to the will of Another. You are not your own.

Did someone speak kindly of you? Did someone say you have rather an engaging and attractive personality? A young man of pleasing address, who has but to knock at a door, and it is opened to him? He has a certain personal power, the sum-total of his abilities, which for want of a better word, we speak of as a man's personality, that which distinguishes and differentiates him from everybody else—not merely his physical features, nor the tone of his voice, nor his height, nor weight, nor how he is dressed—but that something that makes the man himself. Whatever his powers of personality may be, they are not his own. We have nothing if we are Christians. "Ye are not your own."

The young lady who has many friends, who perhaps is able to influence people for good or evil, and is sometimes a little proud of her powers—they are not her own if she is a Christian. They do not belong to her. We have nothing.

II.

There is the fact, but why is it? Can you explain it? Yes; there is A REASON FOR THE FACT: "Ye are not your own. *For ye are bought with a price.*" That is the reason we are not our own. We are bought *from* someone, for we had become bankrupt. We had become the possession of a power to which we had allowed ourselves to be brought under obligation. The Scripture says we were "sold under sin". We were "under the law".

Suppose the case of a man who has violated the law of the land in some way, and by so doing has forfeited his right as a citizen, forfeited all right to liberty. He has come under the condemnation of the law. It must be a terrible thing for a man to stand in the dock and hear the judge, as the voice of the law, with the authority of the law, pronounce thus: "The sentence of the court is that you shall be taken to a certain prison and confined therein for the rest of your natural life"! The man says, "But, sir, I have a position." "You; you have not. You had one, but not now." "I have a family." "No; you have not. You have no family now." "But I have certain rights as a citizen." "You have no rights now. You have forfeited them all. The sentence of the court is that you be confined within a certain prison for the rest of your natural life; as long as you live, you will be a prisoner." If it were possible for someone to buy him off, if it were possible for someone to render to the law satisfaction for his transgression, and pay down the price, and claim him as his own, how wonderful that would be!

We are all "sold under sin". I know some pulpits mock at that, but it is written in the Book, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." We have forfeited all our rights before God.

What if it were, not to be confined for the rest of one's natural life, but that the law decrees that the man has forfeited the right even to live, and the court decrees that his life shall be taken from him because he is not fit to live? That is—or was—our case. "The wages of sin is death." We were under the curse of the law. I sometimes wonder why any of us are so blind as not to believe that. I wonder that a truth that is so self-evident, written on every page of the history of the past, and so abundantly evident in the life of individuals, communities, and nations, the world over, is so generally disbelieved. Is it not true that the whole earth is manifestly, at this very hour, under a curse of some sort? If you cannot see it, you must be blind. There are those who rather mock at the hymn that speaks of this world as a place where "every prospect pleases, and only man is vile", but it is true. The vilest thing on the earth is human nature. You must not compare it to the beast: the beast would be ashamed of us. You never read of beasts doing what men are doing in Spain. You never read of any beast planning and plotting murder by the million, as Hitler and Mussolini, and others on a smaller scale, are doing. "Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." We have been bought *from* someone, from all the power and dominion of the law.

And bought *by* Someone, Who paid the price. We cannot improve upon the teaching of the Word of God. Call it a mechanical theory if you like, but "ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Such as are saved have been bought with a price. What price? What are you worth? How much would anybody give for you? Not very much! Most of us would bring very little. Some of us would not be reckoned to be worth anything—even to a rag man. He would take old iron and rags, but he would not take us! And yet we have been "bought with a price". What price?

I am saying only old things to-night, but I want you who are Christians to think once again of that which you know: "Ye are bought with a price." What price? Have you seen a man who thought he could not afford much, when sickness comes into his home? You have seen him spend all that he had—and then borrow as much as he could—in a desperate effort to save that precious life. He pours out everything he has. If he loses everything in the world, if only that life is spared to him he will count himself rich. One who was a very shrewd observer, and generally knew what he was talking about, said, "All that a man hath will he give for his life." The devil tells the truth sometimes even though he is by nature a liar. It is true that all that a man hath will he give for his life.

Here is One, a Merchant-man seeking goodly pearls, Who learning the price thereof, in order to procure the gem upon which he had set his heart, sold all that he had and bought it. What if the Lord Jesus had said, "I will buy at the utmost price, save only my life." He could have given worlds for our redemption—the silver and the gold, the cattle upon a thousand hills, all the wealth of this and of other worlds; for He is the Heir of all things. But He paid a bigger price than that for us. He gave

His life. He bought us with blood. We are not our own: we are *bought* with a price.

Do you say, "But I thought the blood of Jesus Christ was shed to save us from our sin?" So it was. "I thought He shed His blood to save us from hell?" So He did. But was that all? No! He died that He might wash us, and fit us for heaven. "Where is that?" I do not know, except that it is in His presence. When the Lord Jesus paid the price of our redemption, He bought us for Himself. We belong to Him, spirit, soul, and body. We own nothing: He owns everything. He paid for it all with His own precious blood.

You thought religion consisted in getting a ticket to heaven—joining a church, and trying to be decent and respectable? You thought that is what it means to be a Christian? Those things are merely the externals of life. The Apostle Paul was a man who was well-born, a man who was thoroughly trained, a man of great natural powers, a man who might have achieved distinction in world affairs. His mind has influenced human thought more than any other human mind, energized and enlightened by the Spirit of God. Yet the Apostle Paul said of himself that he was the bondsman of Jesus Christ. It was he who said he was not his own. There was a time when he thought he "ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth", but later he declared that every thought must be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. The Apostle Paul would have said to us, "The Lord Jesus is the Lord of my intellectual life. I have no right to entertain a thought that is contrary to Christ. He is to be Lord, not only of the outer life, but of the inner life. I am the bondsman of Jesus Christ. The marks of His branding are upon me. I belong to Him. All I am and have, for time and for eternity, are His."

That is what it is to be a Christian. Not only attendance upon public worship, the observance of ordinances, and bowing when the minister prays—all that, of course, but vastly more. Such as are saved are the possession of Jesus Christ. We are His, enlisted in His service, and must recognize His Lordship over us every day and hour.

III.

Look now at THE ARGUMENT for a moment, based upon this primary reason. "Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: *therefore glorify God.*" That must be our supreme aim. If you would know what the aim and purpose of a truly regenerate life is, you have it there. The catechism is right when it says that man's chief end is to glorify God. You can easily know whether you are abiding in the will of God or not, whether in any sense your life is glorifying to Him. "The heavens declare the glory of God." Everything He made reflects the glory of God, and our life is out of harmony with the laws of the universe if we are not living to glorify God. Reconciled to Him, attuned to God, He becomes the Centre of our life and its supreme Objective—thus we are in tune with the universe everywhere. We have the whole—how shall I put it?—the fabricated laws of the universe, every power that radiates from God, engaged to help us glorify God.

"Glorify God *in your body.*" All your physical powers are to be devoted to the service of God. No physical power ought ever to be allowed to be alienated from His service. Every power of the body, whatever it is, is to be glorifying to Him. We have the supreme example of

it in the person of our Lord. We were reminded of it in the evening prayer: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." He spake. Then He came down: the Word wrapped itself in human flesh, and tabernacled among us: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth"—and for the first time God was glorified in a human body.

How? You need but to let your mind go back over the inspired pages, and think of the earthly life of our Lord Jesus Christ. He came to Bethlehem's manger. Sometimes you teachers go into homes that are the poorest of the poor, to get little children to come to Sunday School; homes where they have very little, the poorest people of the city. Do you get tired of it? Do you ever come from such homes saying, "I wish I could do something more for them, but really it is a great trial to go." Do not forget the stable, and the manger; do not forget that when Incarnate Deity came to this world He began His career in a stable because "there was no room for him in the inn". That precious little body was laid upon the straw which the cattle were wont to eat. You are no better than He. Do not be above visiting the poorest of the poor. Remember "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich". Remember how He laboured; He had not an idle hour. He gave every flying minute something to keep in store. He had no leisure, even so much as to eat. And we read of at least one occasion when "Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well". He was a man in the flesh, and wanted to show us how we should glorify God in our bodies. He laboured until He was weary—and laboured after He was weary.

One time as He was crossing the lake, He fell asleep. He was so tired that even in the midst of the storm the God-Man slept. His body, free from all sin, was yet wearied by His exertions for us. There is a passage which tells us of a time when every man went unto his own home. I wonder what they said as they parted? I wonder did they say, "Good night, Lord Jesus"? They went away: Peter, James, John, all of them; and nobody said, "Will you come home with me?" And He had nowhere to go, no home. He went to the Mount of Olives, cold, damp, and dark; and He spent the night alone in prayer to God.

And you know well what use He made of His body at last. He came to the garden, and sweat great drops of blood—and while He was doing so, the disciples went to sleep; they were too tired to keep awake. "He came to them and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." By and by He went on His way to the cross, and gave

that body for us. In His flesh, He died; and glorified God in His body.

What may we reserve from Him? Nothing at all. Just such labour He requires of us. I heard of a young preacher who had spent his life in excessive labour. Many had said he would do great things for God—but his life was short, worn out in the service of God. Someone came to him as the fires of fever were burning in his exhausted body and said, "Had you your life to live over again, do you not think you would be a little more careful, that you would work not quite so hard?" "So hard for Him? Were it possible, could I live again, I would work harder still."

It is written concerning the Apostle Paul that when the Holy Ghost testified what he would suffer at Jerusalem, "When we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." In effect he said, "My body is His, my mind and spirit are His. I can hold nothing back. I am going all the way for Him, as He went all the way for me. I am not my own: I am bought with a price."

"Glorify God . . . in your spirit." Have you thought of the capacity of your spiritual nature? We are to be "filled with the Spirit". What is the secret of it? Just this: "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" We are to be indwelt, filled, dominated, absolutely controlled, by the Spirit of God; and thus to glorify Him in our body, and our spirit, "which are his".

There is an admonitory aspect to that truth. If that be so, we must not purloin His time; we must not rob Him of His property; we must not deprive Him of His rights in us, if we are to serve Him.

But, on the other hand, and on this note let me close: *the truth is full of comfort and inspiration for every one of us.* I would like to be sure that I shall get to heaven myself, I should like to be sure that no lion will devour me by the way, I should like to be absolutely certain that I shall be numbered with the blood-washed throng; but I have no assurance in my will, or in the strength of my affection. But knowing I am not my own, but His, that I am His property; when I know that the Lord of the universe has included me—dare I say it—in the list of His assets, and has declared that He will not be denied that which He has purchased unto Himself, I am safe—safe forever:

"When He cometh, when He cometh,
To make up His jewels,
All His jewels, precious jewels,
His loved and His own"—

What then? "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

Are you not glad you are Someone else's, that underneath are the everlasting arms, and that our sovereign God of love claims us for His own, saying, "You are mine for ever. I will look after you, not only to the end of the chapter, but throughout all the endless ages that are yet to come." May the Lord help us to recognize this truth, and to live as those who are "bought with a price".

BEAR YE ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS

It is a matter of general observation that strong characters are developed by strenuous living. The person who is born in the lap of luxury, and to whom necessity denies nothing, unless he has a naturally strong will to enable him to live above his easy and indulgent circumstances, is usually useful to nobody.

Those who live in northern climes, and must often face the winds and snows of Winter, may sometimes wish their lot were cast somewhere beneath southern skies, and amid tropical luxuriance. But such tropical beauties as they dream of are ever more attractive in pictures than in reality. The pictures do not show the bugs and reptiles that flourish in tropical zones. The temperature of northern countries, while it may make one feel the necessity of moving all the time, has the effect of ridding such zones of tropical pests.

So it is with human character. Characters of strength and symmetry are never developed where people are relieved of all responsibility. We have known people who were endowed,—that is to say, they had a competence sufficient for their maintenance; and, being without chick or child, had no responsibility for anyone beyond themselves. It requires real resolution in such cases to avoid a life of easy self-indulgence.

Those who bear burdens sometimes grow weary under the load, but their weariness ever turns out to be growing-pains. Only by bearing each other's burdens can we "fulfil the law of Christ". By which we are to understand, not merely that we fulfil His law objectively, by contributing to others' weal, but that such burden-bearing is indispensable to individual development.

Years ago a lady of keen intellect, with a richly-furnished mind—and, it seemed to us, an unusual discernment—whose pastor was what they call in the Southland "a pretty talker", whose sermons were eloquent rather than instructive, remarked to us, "I have learned during the last seven years that a pastor is a luxury rather than a necessity. We have a minister of delightful personality, who interests and entertains his people, but never instructs them. And while I have been learning that, I have learned also that the Bible is indispensable." This mother in Israel had had to bear her own burdens, and the burdens of many uninstructed young Christians too; with the result that she and they had grown up spiritually together quite independently of the pulpit ministry.

It is quite possible to hear too many addresses, and to read too many books—to procure our religion in cartons containing predigested food, and so become religiously indolent and incapable.

Doubtless our readers have frequently observed what strong and well-rounded Christian characters are developed in small churches where one or two men or women seem to have all the work to do. It is because they have had so much to do they have grown as they have. It is not enough that young Christians should study their Bibles and pray: they should endeavour to do good, and communicate; they should pass on to others the truth they have learned for themselves. We have known young people who have had a very genuine Christian experience, who have allowed themselves to be spoon-fed religiously for too long a time, with the result that, when by reason of the time they ought to have been teachers, it became necessary that they be taught again and again the first principles of the gospel.

The best way to make a biblical truth our own, to assimilate it as the body assimilates food, is to put that truth into practice by endeavouring to lead others to a knowledge of the truth. No Christian can be healthy who is not a burden-bearer. Every church member should assume some responsibility. If he cannot, in the beginning, teach, let him bring others to be taught. If he is too timid to go visiting alone, let him keep another company, and learn how it is done.

Mr. D. L. Moody was one of the most practical of men. His words were never profound in the sense of being obscure, but they were always profoundly simple. We have read that on one occasion when he stepped from the platform he found an enquirer, and hard-by one whom he knew to be a professing Christian. To the Christian man Mr. Moody said, "Come, Mr. So-and-So, and talk with this enquirer." To which the professing Christian replied, "But, Mr. Moody, I could not do such a thing; I have never done it." "Then", said Mr. Moody, "sit down, and I will find someone to talk with you."

How wise! We ought either to be leading others, or else to be led ourselves. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

PROGRAMME

of the

Ninth Annual Convention

of the

Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec

To be held in

Jarvis Street Baptist Church,

Toronto, Ontario,

OCTOBER 20th to 22nd, 1936

SPECIAL SPEAKERS

REV. R. T. KETCHAM, D.D.

Pastor of Central Baptist Church, Gary, Indiana

REV. GEORGE PALMER,

The "Morning Cheer" Hour Radio Preacher, Philadelphia, Pa.

Dinner and Supper will be served in the B. D. Thomas Hall, at thirty-five cents per meal.

PRE-CONVENTION MEETINGS

Monday, October 19th

10.00 a.m.—Meeting of the Executive Board of the Union.

Tuesday, October 20th

11.00 a.m.—Registration of Messengers.

2.30 p.m.—Inspirational Conference in charge of Rev. L. Roblin.

ADDRESS—"Occupying the Home Field"—Rev. R. D. Guthrie.

Followed by Conference and Prayer.

Tuesday Evening

FIRST CONVENTION SESSION

7.30—Prayer and Praise Service, led by Rev. W. E. Smalley.

8.00—Opening of Convention—Rev. A. Thomson, President; presiding.

Adoption of Tentative Constitution.

Appointment of Committee on Nominations.

ADDRESS—Rev. R. T. Ketcham, D.D.

Wednesday, October 21st

Morning

SECOND CONVENTION SESSION

9.30—Prayer and Praise Service, led by Rev. E. E. Hooper.

(Continued on page 8)

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

REV. WILLIAM JONES, EDITOR

Vol. 11 4th Quarter Lesson 42 October 18th, 1936

PREACHING IN THE COURT OF THE TEMPLE

Lesson Text: Jeremiah, Chapters 25, 26, 27.

Golden Text: "Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God; and the Lord will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you."—Jeremiah 26:13.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—Jer. 7:1-15; Tuesday—Acts 5:17-42; Wednesday—Acts 22:1-21; Thursday—I. Kings 9:1-10; Friday—Matthew 11:25-29; Saturday—Rom. 12:1-8.

EXPOSITION

The prophetic word of this Chapter (25) was revealed to Jeremiah at a very definite time (604). So important was the date in ancient history that the fact is noted by the statement concerning Nebuchadnezzar. His first year as King of Babylon (605), he defeated Pharaoh-necho at Carchemish (46:2) in a very crucial battle, one which proved an epochal turning point in history. The Prophet, with incisive penetration into the event, foresaw the rise of the new world power and warned Judah to accept the implications of that victory at Carchemish. In vs. 1-7, we see the cause of Judah's Impending Doom. Beginning with nineteen years under Josiah, the Prophet had spent twenty-three years serving God (3). For the appeal (4, 5), see on 7:25; 11:7. Provoking Jehovah with idols (7) would lead to punishment.

Conquests of Babylon, and Consequent Punishment of Her (8-14). The Babylonians were the scourge in the hand of God (8), Nebuchadnezzar being a servant (perhaps "slave") in a low sense, of Jehovah (Ezek. 29:19, f.). The clans of the North (cf. 1:15; 3:14) would annihilate, destroy (9). The millstone and candle, emblematic of domestic toil and social happiness, would perish (10). The Northerners would bring the Jews and other nations into captivity for approximately seventy years (cf. 29:10). Vs. 12-14 are parenthetical, discussing punishment of Babylon, a digression so far as main thread of narrative (Israel's doom) is concerned. This can be seen in v. 13, for at that point occurs a split in the sentence, the latter half appearing in the Septuagint Version introducing what is in the Hebrew and English texts a section on the foreign nations (Ch. 49:35). Babylon was to reap her own sowing, perhaps in an empire dead forever, more than actual desolation (12). The Babylonians or Chaldeans were to be made slaves (14) or bondmen (Ex. 1:14).

The Wine Cup of God's Wrath for All Nations (15-29). Similar figures of the cup (Ps. 60:3; 75:8), are well-known. The sword, was that of the Lord, probably (47:6). The Prophet in symbolic vision made all nations to drink of the cup, picturing their sure doom, for Jehovah had "sent" Jeremiah with a divine message. Royalty ("kings") were to share in the punishment (18) of Judah. "As it is this day" is a Deuteronomic phrase indicating the completion of the prophecy—a sign that Jeremiah, perhaps added the note. V. 19 ff. shows the direction of the punishment of neighbouring nations—from South to North. Even "mingled people", those dwelling in midst alien people for commercial or similar purposes, yet retaining their own national identity, were to suffer (19). The remnant of Ashdod, city which resisted capture after almost thirty years' siege by Psammetichus (666-610) were to suffer also (20), as were the isle, coastland (lit. where one goes for rest or refuge), or other Phoenecian colonies (21). Dedan, and Tema (250 miles South-east of Edon) commercial people (Is. 21:13, f.) were to suffer; and Arabia (lit. "dwellers in the steppes"), though not modern Arabia (24). Elam (49:34), and Zimri, a people North-east of Assyria shared in the punishment which culminated in the woeful end of Babylon (26). Sheshach is cypher writing for Babylon (cf. 51:41) in which the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet was put for the first;

and so on. World-wide judgment is anticipated, and is here brought into close relationship with Babylonian history, with little perspective of time. The justice of the punishment is seen in the failure of Jehovah's own city to escape (29).

Universal Judgment Enlarged (30-38). Jehovah will roar (lit. "vintage shout, but here "battle shout") in His wrath (30), so that the ends of the earth will hear the noise, or crash of the battle-din (Is. 13:4) when He contends with the nations (31). The horrible carnage is described in vs. 32, 33 (cf. 8: 2), and the pitiful wails of rulers (34, 35). Their voice like a "Hark!" is heard to no avail, for as a lion seeking another shelter when his is destroyed, so Jehovah (cf. "roar", v. 30) forsakes His land in its desolation (38).

Chapter 26 is dated in Jehoiakim's time, before the fourth year of his reign (cf. Ch. 25, 36), and is a summary of conditions in which Jeremiah gave previous prophecies (Int., Ch. 7). The events of Ch. 20:1 took place after this, or at the same time as those in this Chapter.

The Temple's Fate Prophesied (1-6). In the outer court, the Prophet spoke to pilgrims (2), the words of the Law (4), in the hope they would repent (3) at persistent prophetic preaching (5) [cf. 7:13]. Disobedience would affect the venerated Temple (as it did Shiloh), as prophesied in I. Kings 9:6-8 (cf. 7:12).

The Official attack on Jeremiah, and His Trial (7-19). The ever-spying prophets (false) and priests, though polite enough to let him finish his discourse, demand the death of the Prophet, according to the Law (Deut. 18:20 or Lev. 24:16). The cause of their demand was blasphemy (9), and the occasion of his prophecy of captivity (25:11). His accusers were oblivious to similar prophecies made by Isaiah 5:5, f., and Amos (2: 4, f.) The Trial proper is narrated beginning at v. 10. The princes, officials of some sort went to the Temple from the Palace (22:1), and "sat" at the upper gate (20:2). The charge was hurled at Jeremiah by his own colleagues (11), an accusation similar to that against Stephen (Acts 7:12). The Prophet makes his own defense, asserting his mandate from Jehovah (12); its relation as a message to others (14), and to himself (14, 15). The princes, as judges render a preliminary verdict to the people acting as jury ("assembly of the people"). The elders sustain it, after consulting the people whom they represented, by testimony (17) and historic appeal to the similar case of the Prophet Micah (18, R. V.). The similarity of prophecies is patent (cp. Micah 3:12 with 9:11). Singularly this quotation or citation is the only one by name of another prophet in all prophecy. The legal opinion carried the day (19).

The Story of Uriah (20-24). Jeremiah, or Baruch his amanuensis, perhaps, adds this story to the narrative to show the danger threatening the Prophet. The event probably followed Jeremiah's trial. It would have been rash if narrated at the time, for Jehoiakim was then on the throne. Ahikam was friendly, and the verdict of v. 16 was cemented. Ahikam was a useful member of the godly family of Shaphan (cf. 36:12; 39:14; II. Kings 22:12).

APPLICATION

God is still Creator (27:5), and the disposition of the world is His, despite dictators and myriad-economic schemes. He gives (6, 7) even to wicked men for a purpose. His cup of wrath ought to remind us (25:15) of the cup which the Saviour drank on our behalf. All men must drink of it, either in Christ representatively, or out of Him.

We see that the servants of God may have long, faithful, conscientious ministries without a successful issue in this life (25:3). With only one message, in season and out (5, 6) the whole counsel of God was proclaimed, though the temptation to minimize it, mollify it came (21:2; cf. Deut. 4:2; 12:32). The gospel may be graded or adapted, but never adulterated. Notice the Prophet's own pleading with unperturbed courage in the face of death, like Paul later. Note God's use of natural means to effect deliverance. He never works miracles without adequate cause. The use of government (26:16) reveals the advantages of separation of Church and State. The presence of laymen insured justice, whereas today religious folk sometimes are intolerable. The appeal to history (18) is noteworthy. History is the balance wheel of prophecy. Neglected it leads to excesses; heeded it provides poise and balance.

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

REV. WILLIAM J. JONES, EDITOR

Vol. 11 4th Quarter Lesson 43 October 25th, 1936

ANSWERING A FALSE PROPHET

Lesson Text: Jeremiah, Chapters 28, 29.

Golden Text: "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."—Jeremiah 29:13.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—Deut. 18:15-22; Tuesday—Rom. 13:1-10; Wednesday—Is. 40:1-11; Thursday—Is. 43:1-7; Friday—Is. 49:14-22; Saturday—Jer. 21:1-10.

EXPOSITION

For the date of to-day's lesson chapters, see 27:1.

The False Prophecy of Hananiah (28:1-4). Hananiah of Gibeon, a priestly city (Josh. 21:7), delivered his prediction publicly (1). Note the precise time which may have been even the same day as that of the episode mentioned in 27:2. He was one of the false prophets for whose opposition to Jeremiah see notes on 23:9, 16. His message, without condition of any kind, was contradictory to that of Jeremiah with respect to the Temple vessels (23) [cp. 27:22], and Jeconiah (4) cp. 22:26 f. who may have been a favourite monarch of Hananiah (4). Hananiah may have hoped that the confederacy of alliance against Nebuchadnezzar would succeed (27:1, ff.) at an early date.

The Reply of Jeremiah and Its Effect on Hananiah (5:11). Jeremiah replied boldly (5) even wishing that it were possible for speedy deliverance, from Babylon (6). But in characteristic dependence on and oneness with the order of Prophets, especially the older ones and their message, Jeremiah, like them, prophesied against Judah as well as other nations (8). As long as his message of doom was confined to others, he incurred no disfavour. But, unlike the false prophets, he believed God was of such a nature that His punitive power extended to Israel too (cf. end app., Ch. 14). Hence, one who braved severe criticism by regarding future blessing as coming only after chastisement of the chosen people gave negative, yet presumptive evidence of prophetic genuineness and authenticity to which the positive test of fulfilled prediction (cp. last ref. above) was added, and that of intercessory power (27:18). The calm, deliberate answer of the Prophet irked his opponent so that he lost his temper (10), tearing off the yoke of Jeremiah. The false prophet repeated his brazen forecast (11), whereupon Jeremiah went his way in silent self-composure.

Subsequent Reply of Jeremiah (12-17). On a later occasion in less disturbing circumstances, Jeremiah flatly denied Hananiah by a fresh and more specific divine revelation (13, 14). The substance of the prediction was virtually the same as 26:6-8, save that the new prophecy referred to the yoke of iron the Prophet used to illustrate the added burden of the Captivity should they by accepting Hananiah's attitude, resist the Babylonians. Jeremiah was obliged to pronounce Jehovah's sentence of death upon his adversary (15, 16), for speaking rebellion (cf. Deut. 13:5). Note the fulfillment within two months (17; cp. vs. 1).

The date of Chapter 29 is peculiar. It was after Ch. 24 (note refs. to it in this portion, e.g. v. 17 with 24:2, 8; v. 18 with 24:29), but before Ch. 27, 28, as is may have preceded Zedekiah's visit to Babylon (51:59).

The Letter of Jeremiah to the Captives. Its Date (1-3). The letter is, in all probability, the earliest extant letter from the Old Testament period. It was sent to all classes (1) because the exiles were threatened by false prophets predicting early restoration (8, 15; Ezek. 13:13) as were the residue at home (27:9; 28:3f.). The epistle was written after the second deportation which included Jehoiachin, Nehushta, and Ezekiel (II. Kings 24:14; Ezek. 38:21). It was carried by two members of the family of Shaphan (cf. 27:24) Elasah, his fourth son, and Gemariah, his grandson.

Its Message (4-23). The exiles were instructed to settle down in the land of captivity, conducting all the normal secular pursuits, including the civil (4-7). The Prophet was explicit in this latter point, insisting on the hallowing of that function by the religious exercise of prayer, for ultimately the peace of the city of exile (whether Babylon or any other) was to be their peace (7). False prophets and their mes-

sages were to be rejected (8, 9), for Jehovah's word concerning the length of Babylonian sway and thus of the Captivity, would surely stand. After that period He would fulfil the promise of 24:6, He whose ultimate thoughts for Israel were of peace and not evil (11), and whose purposes were for a hopeful future (31:19; cf. Prov. 23:18). At that time the Lord would hear at stated places probably, their prayer (contrast 11:14; Is. 58:4), and be found of them (12, 13) if they sought Him with all their hearts (24:7). V. 14 may refer to restoration from a general captivity differing from a Babylonian. In vs. 15-19 the letter refers parenthetically to punishment to be meted out to Zedekiah (16) and the remnant in the Land (24:8, ff.) because the word of the false prophets in Babylon (15) would be disproved by the vanishing of the subject Jerusalem state and the captivity of its members (17, 18). For the character of their sufferings, see 19:8; 24:9; 25:18. The letter said that even the spurious prophets would suffer wretched and execrable deaths (20-22) because of their falsehoods and their gross immorality (23). Though obscure prophets, the names of two are given. Kolaiah, father of one of them, bore a name on which the Prophet played because of similarity in sound in the Hebrew to the words, "slay", and "roasted". The cause of the punishment we have seen (above); the occasion is seen from the penalty of Ahab (22) which was probably violation of some law of Babylon (Dan. 3:6, 21). The conclusion of the letter was a reminder that Jehovah knew their sin.

Shemaiah Denounced (24-32). Jeremiah uttered a prophecy against Shemaiah (possibly in the form of an "open letter", sending him a copy—"unto"—R. V. mg.). Shemaiah, one of the false prophets in Babylon who were aroused and incensed against Jeremiah because of his letter, in his own name had written rashly to Zephaniah the acting High Priest (26), [or at least second priest (52:24)] and to others (24, 25). However, Zephaniah, who was friendly to Jeremiah, read him Shemaiah's letter, upon which the Prophet sent his prophetic letter to Shemaiah (29). The matter of Shemaiah's letter to Zephaniah is quoted in the midst of the prophet's own communication (26-28). Shemaiah appealed to the vulgar derision of prophets (I. Sam. 10:11 f.) and to the popular, or at least perverted if not widespread, notion that madness was an adjunct of prophetic phenomena (such as Jeremiah's symbolism, e.g. yoke) which did occur in prophetism (II. Kings 19:20-24). He officiously demanded the arrest of Jeremiah (26), implying that Prophet was mad (lit. "fanatic"—II. Kings 9:11; Hos. 9:7) and only pretended to be a prophet (27). Note that Shemaiah's verbally active quotation (28) of the prophecy of Jeremiah which provoked the controversy. All the letter preceding v. 30 had been parenthetical. At v. 31 the final reason for punishment is given, and the penalty for the false prophecy of Shemaiah stated (32).

APPLICATION

We must admire the bravery of the Prophet in wearing the humiliating yoke (28:13), but he considered the message of truth more important than the messenger. He "withstood to the face", like Paul (Gal. 2:14). False preaching and teaching like the false prophecy of Hananiah (28:1-4) may be comfortable, specious, given with great *aplomb*. Albeit, frequently it is audacious and so unfounded that a dispassionate rebuttal like that of Jeremiah (7, ff.) brings an unreasoned, meaningless repetition of the message (11), spoken in anger (18), and accompanied by insult and abuse the last resort of a hapless opponent. Our controversy ought to be fair, intellectually honest, controlled, and free from all rancour. Sometimes the answer to passionate, unthinking rage is quiet withdrawal (11). How telling the words, "Jeremiah went his way"! But truth must be proclaimed again and again, as Jeremiah returned with renewed spirit and message to Hananiah (13, ff.).

Note that the exiles regarded the peace of Babylon (29:7) illustrating the integral connection between the spiritual and the material, as demonstrated by the use of prayer (I. Tim. 2:1-3). We must not be aloof from world conditions and affairs. Civic duties are not optional, but mandatory for the believer, even if he concur not in the particular government (Rom. 13:1-7) as certainly the Jew in Babylon. The command to him pertained to commercial and family life, spheres in which so much moral and spiritual confusion reigns to-day. All things are ours for proper use (I. Tim. 4:4 f.).

PROGRAMME*(Continued from page 5)*

- 10.00—Rev. Jas. Hall, Vice-President, presiding.
Presentation of Annual Report of the Executive Board of the Union.
- 11.30—ADDRESS—Rev. H. C. Slade, on "Opportunities in the Northland".

Afternoon**THIRD CONVENTION SESSION**

- 2.00—Prayer and Praise Service, led by Rev. J. K. Yalland.

FOREIGN MISSIONS

- 2.30—Rev. W. N. Charlton, Vice-President, presiding.
ADDRESS—Rev. H. L. Davey.
ADDRESS—Rev. E. E. Shields.

Evening**FOURTH CONVENTION SESSION**

- 7.30—Prayer and Praise Service, led by Rev. A. C. Whitcombe.
- 8.00—Rev. A. Thomson, President, presiding.
ADDRESS—Rev. R. T. Ketcham, D.D.

Thursday, October 22nd

Morning**FIFTH CONVENTION SESSION**

- 9.30—Prayer and Praise Service, led by Rev. J. F. Dempster.

- 10.00—Rev. W. N. Charlton, Vice-President, presiding.
Report of Committees.
Election of Convention Officers and Board Members.
- 11.30—ADDRESS—Rev. Bernard Jeffery.

Afternoon**SIXTH CONVENTION SESSION**

- 2.00—Prayer and Praise Service, led by Rev. J. Watt.
2.30—Rev. Jas. Hall, Vice-President, presiding.

EDUCATIONAL SESSION**Speakers:**

1. "The Seminary in Jamaica"—Mr. S. Black.
2. "The Seminary in France"—Mr. F. Buhler.
3. "The Seminary Prospect and Retrospect"—The President—Dr. T. T. Shields.
4. Dr. R. T. Ketcham.

Evening**SEVENTH CONVENTION SESSION**

- 7.30—Prayer and Praise Service, led by Rev. L. Hisey.
8.00—Rev. A. Thomson, presiding.
Introduction of new Officers and Board Members.
ADDRESS—Rev. George Palmer.
Adjournment.
Benediction.

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