



SCRIPTURE: Jeremiah 8:4-7; 26: 31. DEVOTIONAL READING: Psalm 51: 1-13.

### Personal Religion

Lesson for December 11, 1949

ELCTRICITY was discovered long ago, but there are millions of people today who never use it and don't know anything about it. Modern plumbing has been in use ever since most of us were born; but most human beings still walk for their water instead of getting it from pipes. All inventions take a while to get around. So it is in the realm of the spirit. Jeremiah the prophet, Dr. Foreman has said, is the "man who discovered the individual." But 2700 years after his time, the individual needs rediscovering. Even in the church, some people live and act as if Jeremiah's discovery had never been made.

A Man Stands Alone

ALTHOUGH JEREMIAH was a priest and aristocrat by birth, his own class disdained him. The story in Jeremiah 29 shows dramatically why this was. He predicted doom for his nation, and since his own "upper-bracket" people were the nation's leaders, they considered Jeremiah's attitude not only unpatriotic but a downright personal insult.

If it had been left to the priests and the official prophets, the day of Jeremiah's sermon at the temple would have been his last. To put it bluntly, the difference between Jeremiah and all the other "prophets" and priests could be put this way: He knew the nation was too rotten to last, but they thought it was plenty good enough.

They probably could have agreed with him that a wicked nation deserves divine punishment; only they could see nothing wrong with Judah.

Religion by Proxy?

THOSE WERE mistaken many ways. Mistake number one: They thought the Temple, with all that went on in it, was much more important to God than it really was. The whole business—Temple, white-robed priests, chanting choirs, the burning of animals, the incense and the mystic lights—it had become in their eyes a sort of immense good-luck charm. They thought: Surely God will not destroy a city that contains this Temple!

But Jeremiah saw through that mistake. Institutions, rituals, organizations, ceremonies, sacraments, these are all simply means to an end, they have no value in themselves. Everything we call "public worship" is good only if and so far as it lifts and cleanses the spirits of the worshipers and brings them nearer God.

The most perfect and impressive worship, engaged in by those whose hearts are evil, becomes a blasphemy. A fine church is no substitute for fine people. A beautiful worship program will not conceal from God's eye unbeautiful souls.

Mistake number two: The priests and prophets supposed there was such a thing as religion by proxy. They thought the priests by carrying on their duties could take care of the situation.

### God writes on the heart

ANOTHER MISTAKE made by those poor fools of false prophets and priests was in supposing they had the Law of God, when all they had was two tables of stone shut up in a box (1 Kings 8:9). They were proud of those tables of stone, they were the Commandments of God, and they were guarded most carefully in the Holy of Holies in the Temple. Surely, God would not destroy the city that possessed the Sacred Law! But Jeremiah knew better. In the long run, the only place the Law of God does real good is when it is written on the heart.

In Jeremiah's most famous prophecy (chap. 31) he looks forward to the day when God's handwriting shall be not on tables of stone but on human hearts. That prophecy is being fulfilled day by day as persons turn their hearts to the Lord and open the book of their lives that God may write his laws there.

Yet how many people have never learned this truth! Having a great tradition is good; owning and reading the Bible is good; but it is not the Bible on the shelf that counts, not carrying a testament in the pocket, but the Word of God 'hid in the heart' of those who know, love and do what God desires.

### Rural Churches

Monroe Methodist  
W. L. Hall, minister  
9:30 a. m. Morning worship. Sermon by Dr. A. W. Pugh.  
10:30 a. m. Sunday school.  
6:15 p. m. M. Y. F.  
7 p. m. Zurich's accordian band. A free will offering will be received.

Wednesday 7 p. m. Mid-week service. 7:45, choir practice.

Thursday 7 p. m. Christmas program.

The public is invited to all of these services.

Calvary Evangelical United Brethren  
Albert N. Straley, pastor

We will feature an illustrated worship service Sunday evening at 7 p. m. The title is "Christmas in Bethlehem." Everyone is cordially invited.

The morning service will begin with Sunday school at 9:30 a. m. under the direction of Lloyd Lichtenberger, superintendent. The lesson is entitled "Jeremiah teaches Personal Religion."

Following Sunday school, the prayer service will be held with the class leader, James Darr, in charge.

### Christmas Cards

boxed assortments — or separate cards for every need — excellent assortment

### Holthouse Drug Co.

**GIFTS**  
For Him!  
**Stucky & Co.**  
MONROE, IND.

## 300 REASONS

### WHY YOU SHOULD ATTEND THE BAND MOTHERS PARTY

For Benefit of Coldwater High School Band and Memorial Park

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11

And Alternate Sundays Thereafter  
City Hall — Coldwater, Ohio  
8:00 p. m. Refreshments



Little Big Feather Says:

"Easy tune own tom-tom. Car different. I take car to Pontiac dealer once in while so it make good music."

**Major Motor Tune-up**

by factory-trained experts

**DECATUR SUPER SERVICE**  
224 W. Monroe St.



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### St. Paul and Winchester U. B. Circuit

Dale Osborn, pastor  
St. Paul  
Sunday School 9:15 a. m.  
Christian Endeavor 7 p. m.  
Sermon 7:30 p. m.  
Choir practice, Tues. 6:45 p. m.  
Prayer Meeting Tues. 7:30 p. m.  
Winchester

Sunday School 9:30 a. m.

Prayer meeting Wednesday 7:30 p. m.

Pleasant Mills Baptist Church

D. B. Gehres, pastor

Lowell Noll, supt.

9:30 — Bible School. Lesson:

"Jeremiah Teaches Personal Religion."

10:30 — Worship service. Sermon: "The Dispensations." This is a continuation of last Sunday's message.

The greatest friend of truth is time; her greatest enemy is preju-

dice."

St. Luke Reformed Church

Honduras

H. H. Meckstroth, minister

9:00 Worship Service.

10:00 Sunday School.

7:00 Youth Fellowship.

Thursday — An all-day meeting of the Women's Guild.

Thursday — Girls' Guild pot-luck supper at 6:30. This will be the Christmas meeting.

Methodist Circuit

Walter Johnson, pastor

Mt. Tabor

Sunday School 9:30.

Morning Service 10:45.

Prayer meeting Thurs. 7:00.

Mt. Pleasant

Morning Service 9:30.

Sunday School 10:30.

Morning Service 10:45.

Prayer meeting Wed. 7:00.

Pleasant Valley

Sunday School 10:30.

Communication 9:30.

Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not. Rom. 12:14.

Pleasant Grove

9:00 a. m. Sunday school.

10:00 a. m. Preaching Service.

7:00 p. m. Christian Endeavor.

7:30 p. m. Wednesday, prayer meeting.

Mt. Victory

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