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THE USE OF JEREMIAH
WITH YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY

By

WESLEY GILBERT HANKINS
A.B., Seattle Pacific College

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SACRED THEOLOGY
in
The Biblical Seminary in New York

New York, N.Y.
August 1946

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

THE USE OF JEREMIAH
WITH YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem

Young people today are in need of spiritual guidance through wise leadership. They need a source of spiritual guidance that will surpass the guidance given to modern warfare by radar and the bombsight. They are living in a world that calls out in a thousand ways for their attention. Naturally young people today are persistently asking: "What is valuable for us today?" A part of the answer to this question is found in Jeremiah! Here is the spiritual guidance needed so greatly for youth today. In the person of Jeremiah, who so closely resembled Christ, is found the type of leadership for which young people are asking today. Alexander Whyte, in comparing Jeremiah with other prophets of the Old Testament, said:

"Some other prophets stand in time and place nearer to the New Testament; but it is only in time and place. No prophet of them all stands in reality so near to Jesus Christ. Jeremiah is the true forerunner of our Lord."¹

The problem raised by the question of young people today is this: How is it possible to use Jeremiah to meet the spiritual needs of young people today? Spiritual needs refer to those needs of the soul which can only be supplied through God's grace which is given through Christ. Many people recognize the values in the book of Jeremiah in a general way, but for this study a plan must be devised to mine the spiritual truths in the book and apply them to specific spiritual needs of youth of the modern age. That the needs are great is beyond question!

Young people for the purpose of this study are those adolescents from sixteen to twenty-one years of age. Luella Cole points out that this period of youth is made up of middle adolescents from sixteen to eighteen, and also late adolescents from nineteen to twenty-one.² The period from sixteen to twenty-one is usually made up of youth

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1. Alexander Whyte, Bible Characters, p. 152.
2. Luella Cole, Psychology of Adolescents, p. 6.

who are in the last two years of high school and the entire four years of college.

The whole book of Jeremiah will be used for this study. The chief concern of this study is with the spiritual resources in the book and with spiritual needs of modern youth.

B. The Significance of the Problem

The problem is significant for the following reasons: first, because the conditions of young people today are similar to those of the days of Jeremiah. This is especially true in regard to spiritual and military conditions. For in Jeremiah's day as well as in ours the spiritual conditions of young people were at a low ebb.¹ The military conditions affected the young people in Jeremiah's day as they do today. The references to young men suffering and dying in battle are prominent.² Wars raged in the times of Jeremiah as they did recently in the twentieth century. Nations arose to power and then fell as they have in this age.

Secondly, its solution will provide a storehouse

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1. Jeremiah 32:30; 3:24-25; 22:21, and 31:19.
2. Ibid., 11:22; 18:21; 51:20, 22. (Other nations--48:15, 49:26; 50:30, and 51:3).

of spiritual wealth. For to discover and apply the lasting truths in Jeremiah to the spiritual needs of young people is to open up new horizons of truth for the mind and for the growth of the soul. It is tapping spiritual resources greater than the material resources of atomic energy. The same secrets that made Jeremiah a worldwide leader become the possession of young people and their leaders. His life challenges the lives of young people and their leaders at every point!

Thirdly, Jeremiah has been neglected too greatly. Little work has been done on Jeremiah for young people in the form of writing. Many youth leaders have failed to discover the values of the book of Jeremiah for youth. This failure has been due to the length of the book, the false conception that Jeremiah was but a weeping, discouraged prophet, and the lack of Bible study among youth leaders. It is hoped that this study will stimulate a new interest in Jeremiah as a book for young people.

C. The Method and Procedure to Be Used.

The general method of this study will be first-hand intensive study of the book of Jeremiah. Books about Jeremiah will be relegated to a second place. The purpose of this study is to discover and to apply the lasting.

truths in Jeremiah to the spiritual needs of youth now.

The particular method to be used in this study will be shown in the titles of the chapters. The second chapter will treat the use of the biography of Jeremiah. This will be found to be the core of the study, for in the personality of Jeremiah, a leader for the twentieth century is found! The third chapter will deal with the use of the many inspiring devotional passages for youth. The fourth will bring to light the use of the situations in Jeremiah's day that parallel the present. The fifth will show the use with young people of the ingenious methods used by Jeremiah to make his addresses challenging and to hold the attention of his listeners. The sixth chapter will give a general summary and conclusion.

D. Sources of Data

The primary source will be the American Revised Version of the English Bible. The secondary sources will be commentaries and the books written about Jeremiah. Most of the material will be taken directly from the book of Jeremiah as a result of firsthand study. Books on youth will be quoted occasionally.

CHAPTER II
THE USE OF THE
BIOGRAPHY OF JEREMIAH

CHAPTER II

THE USE OF THE BIOGRAPHY OF JEREMIAH

A. Introduction

It is the purpose of this chapter to show the qualities in Jeremiah's life that will build Christlike character in youth today. Jeremiah's likeness to Christ qualifies him to be a leader for modern young people. Youth can read his life through the pages of the scripture, and be guided into useful living. The life of Jeremiah will help to meet many needs of modern youth. The specific needs which will be met are: (1) consistent everyday living, (2) a consistent prayer life, (3) a firm purpose, and (4) loyalty to Christ. These needs become problems that must be solved. To whom must youth look today for leadership and guidance? Many of them look to the wrong leaders, as did German youth so recently. Many American youth are looking to stars of the screen for guidance rather than to Jeremiah and other great characters of the Bible. But in Jeremiah is found a leader who was qualified to be a leader for modern youth and their leaders. This can be said because of his Christlike

character, his fearlessness, his loyalty to God, and his regular prayer life.

B. His Early Life

1. His Call To His Life's Work.

a. The Nature of the Call.

Jeremiah was called by God to become a prophet¹ unto the world when he was a young man in his twenties. However, this age is conjectural. By his birth Jeremiah was a priest because his father Hilkiah of Anathoth² and his family were priests. But Jeremiah's call was a special call! It was a call to become "a prophet unto the nations."³ What then is the difference between a "priest" and a "prophet"? A prophet is "one who speaks for another, esp. for God or a god; one who prophesies future events."⁴ Thus, God called Jeremiah to speak and to foresee future events. A priest was born unto a priestly family and did not have a special divine call as did Jeremiah. A priest performed the routine duties of the tabernacle, and interpreted the law. Jeremiah was a descendant of Levi and Aaron.

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1. Ibid., 1:4-10.

2. Ibid., 1:1.

3. Ibid., 1:5, 10.

4. Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Fifth Edition.

Thus, Jeremiah was a priest by birth, and a prophet by a special divine call from God.

Jeremiah was positive that his call came from God and not from himself or men. Many false prophets of his day called themselves to the office of the prophet. When the call came from God, the youthful Jeremiah exclaimed in true humility:

"Ah, Lord Jehovah! behold, I know not how to speak; for I am a child."¹

But God would not take this as an excuse. For he answered Jeremiah immediately:

"Say not I am a child; for to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go, and whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak."²

The two visions that followed convinced Jeremiah beyond the shadow of a doubt that the call was from God.

In addition to the source of the call, three things are noticed about the nature of the call. It was foreordained, individual, and world-wide. First, it was foreordained. Notice the phrases: "Before I formed thee... before thou camest forth out of the womb." Yes, God had chosen Jeremiah even before birth to become a prophet to the world. Notice again the phrases: "I knew...I sanc-

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1. Ibid., 1:6.
2. Ibid., 1:7.

tified...I appointed." God had taken the initiative even before the birth of Jeremiah. The first words that God spoke to Jeremiah at the time of the call were:

"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee; I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations."¹

Secondly, the call of Jeremiah was individual. There were many mediocre priests at Anathoth, the birthplace and home of Jeremiah. But God chose a certain young man to become a prophet of righteousness. We know very little about the others, except that they opposed him and tried to kill him. There were but a few true prophets in the days of Jeremiah according to our knowledge. The ones of which we know are: Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel.² There were many false prophets who were not called by God. The individual character of Jeremiah's call is realized since Anathoth was but one of the forty-eight cities for the priests that had been assigned to the Levites in the days of Joshua.³ Jeremiah was called as one out of thousands of young men who may have been more promising in the eyes of

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1. Ibid., 1:5.
2. H. H. Halley, Pocket Bible Handbook, 16th Ed., p. 217.
3. Joshua 21:18, 41.

the religious leaders. God still calls youth! Young people can learn from this incident that God calls individuals here and there as he so desires. Each young person should be urged to respond to the call of God should it come to him or to her.

Thirdly, the call of Jeremiah was world-wide. God said to him: "I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations."¹ And also he said: "I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms."² Jeremiah's task was not limited to the Jews nor to Palestine. Jeremiah is a leader for youth today! Jeremiah's message has gone out all over the world, for the Bible has been translated into over a thousand languages. Not only does his message extend to many nations now, but even while he was living, he prophesied concerning many nations.³ His writings were no doubt widely read during his lifetime. He foretold the fate of Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, and Babylon. History teaches us that Jeremiah's prophecy was fulfilled concerning these nations. Jeremiah also has a message for America as a nation. He has a message

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1. Jeremiah 1:5.
2. Ibid., 1:10.
3. Ibid., 46-51.

for the youth of America and of the world. His life will challenge many young people to enter the mission fields of the world, at home and abroad.

b. The Importance of the Call.

Jeremiah's call was important because of the sinful conditions of the people at the time of the call. Even the priests and the prophets were corrupt.¹ They lied, told the people pleasant things, never preached against the horrors of sin, and cried: "Peace! Peace!" when there was none. The people also were sinful as God related to Jeremiah at the time of the call.² The people, both young and old alike, turned their backs on God, worshipped idols, refused to listen to Jeremiah, and were disobedient. At a later occasion Jeremiah recorded his attitude toward them in these sharp words:

"But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone."³

Jeremiah came on the stage of history at a critical moment. The king at the time of the call was Josiah, who was a righteous man, and a year before the call

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1. Ibid., 23:9-40.
2. Ibid., 1:16.
3. Ibid., 5:23.

of Jeremiah had started social reform in Judah. But it must be remembered that Josiah, who had been in power for thirteen years at the time of Jeremiah's call, was the first righteous king in Judah in nearly sixty years!¹

Judah was still reaping the wild oats that had been sown by Manasseh, who ruled for fifty-five years, who had caused innocent babies to be sacrificed to idols, and Amon who had ruled for two dreadful years.² Jeremiah was called to action when Judah was at a low spiritual ebb! Perhaps conditions had been worse fifteen years before, but the conditions at the time of the call were critical.

Secondly, Jeremiah's message made the call important. His message was God's living and vital words. At the time of the call Jehovah reached out his hand and touched Jeremiah's lips and said: "Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth."³ Jeremiah was to be God's mouth-piece unto the world. God's message through him was to be penetrating. On a later occasion God said to Jeremiah:

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1. H. H. Halley, op. cit., p. 205.
2. II Kings 21; 11-26.
3. Jeremiah 1:9.

"I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and¹
this people wood, and it shall devour them."

Yes, the call was made important because of the message as well as the sinful conditions of the people. The call of a young person today is important for the same two reasons. God is still calling youth today to serve him. In many ways the calls today will be the same as the call that came to the young man Jeremiah. God not only called Jeremiah, but he also provided for his preparation as he does for youth now.

2. His Preparation For His Life's Work.

a. By God.

Jeremiah cried out in true humility that he was but a child, and was not able to fill the new position. But God was ready and willing to prepare him for the task. There is no record of any theological schools in Jeremiah's day for the prophets, so God prepared Jeremiah at the time of the call by assurance. He showed him two visions: an almond tree and a boiling caldron. First, God showed Jeremiah an almond tree and asked him what he saw. Jeremiah answered correctly and promptly. God praised him: "Thou hast well seen." Then God played on

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1. Ibid., 5:14.

words, saying: "For I watch over my word to perform it."¹
The word "almond" and "watch" come from the same Hebrew verb which means "to watch" or "to wait." Thus, God's word was to be "alert" and "watchful." The almond tree blossomed earlier than other trees. God's word also was to be early! This same assurance is given to modern youth in different ways. "For the word of God is quick and powerful."² They are assured by God that the Bible is true and that its authority is from God. This assurance gives courage to the young person today!

The second vision was a boiling caldron. As Jeremiah's mission was to foretell the future, as well as to speak for God, God told Jeremiah of a coming event by the use of the caldron. This coming event is held to be the Scythian invasion of 625 B. C. or else the Babylonian invasions of 597 and 586 B. C. After much study the writer believes it to be the former invasion. But the reason God gave Jeremiah this vision was to assure him that he was to be able to foretell future events. This gave Jeremiah much assurance and courage. When God calls a

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1. Ibid., 1:12.
2. Hebrews 4:12.

youth, he gives him courage. Then, as if the two visions were not enough, God prepared Jeremiah by telling him that all through life, he would protect him and keep him from harm. God does the same today for youth whom he chooses to protect in a special way. Here is the great promise of protection that Jeremiah received:

"For, behold, I have made thee this day a fortified city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls, against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee, saith Jehovah, to deliver thee."¹

b. By Formal Training.

Jeremiah, as far as it can be discovered, had no formal training for his office as a prophet. It can be rightly assumed that he had training for the office of a priest at the city of Anathoth. The major part of this training was no doubt in the interpretation of the law. In the days of Samuel² and even as late as Elisha,³ there were "schools of the prophets" which were comparable to present-day theological colleges.⁴ But there is no re-

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1. Jeremiah 1:18-19.
2. I Samuel 19:19-20.
3. II Kings 2:3, 5; 4:38.
4. William Smith, Smith's Bible Dictionary, p. 535.

cord of any such schools during the time of Jeremiah. Perhaps the reason was that the spiritual life of the nation was so low that all of these prophetic schools had been closed. But, nevertheless, Jeremiah was prepared by God. God prepares youth now in the same manner. Even though formal training may be withheld from them because of poverty or a lack of schools, God chooses and trains in the school of prayer those select youth who are divinely called to serve him as teachers, preachers, business people, and church workers. Youth now should not be discouraged if formal education is impossible for them, because God is able to prepare them in heart and mind for the work to which he has called them. Jeremiah's life was successful from the beginning to the end because of his prayer life and his close fellowship with God.

C. His Active Ministry

1. His Loyalty To God.

Jeremiah is best characterized by his complete loyalty to God. This is one of the greatest needs of modern youth. Their loyalty, if directed wrongly, becomes a serious problem for the leaders of youth. Jeremiah's loyalty to God will be found to challenge the loyalty of young people. Jeremiah's loyalty will be seen in two ways.

a. His Uncompromising Message.

Obviously not all youth today will be called to become teachers or preachers, but still the message of their testimonies should be uncompromising. When God called Jeremiah, he charged him thus:

"Arise and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at them, lest I dismay thee before them."¹

Such a charge left no room for compromise! Throughout his ministry of more than forty years, Jeremiah's message was the same: (1) repent of your sins, (2) return to God, and (3) if you do not, certain punishment will come upon you. When bloodthirsty mobs threatened him, Jeremiah still preached the same. He gave the same uncompromising message to kings, rulers, priests, the people, and to everyone. Even after the people had rebelled against God's command and had gone down into Egypt,² Jeremiah called them to repentance at the risk of his life.³ He told them of the punishment that was to come upon them unless they repented of their sins.

Jeremiah's loyalty to God caused him to be uncompromising in his message. Young people today are

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1. Jeremiah 1:7.
2. Ibid., 43:7.
3. Ibid., 44:11-14, 23.

tempted to compromise the content of their testimonies before sinful people, their friends, and their school companions. The temptation to compromise is probably the greatest temptation that youth faces today. But if they will follow the example of Jeremiah and be loyal to God, they will be victorious.

b. His Uncompromising Living.

Many young people of today can make a fine profession of faith in Christ, but they sometimes do not live up to it. Jeremiah did both! He had an uncompromising, genuine witness and the same type of everyday living. This is greatly needed in youth now. As his personality is studied, Jeremiah is seen as the man with a single standard. He lived the same during the week as he did on the Sabbath. He lived the same ways as he preached. He gave the same uncompromising message to one and all. He lived uncompromisingly before everyone. However, it must be pointed out that one time at least, Jeremiah was tainted with sin.¹ However, God called him to repentance and it is assumed, in the light of his subsequent living, that without delay, he obeyed and repented.

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1. Ibid., 15:18-19.

What a lesson for young people today. For their greatest problem is sin, and they too must repent of it as did Jeremiah.

Jeremiah, at all other times, showed his complete loyalty to God by his uncompromising living. God spoke to him one day when he was in prison. The time was one year before the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B. C. God commanded Jeremiah to purchase a field at Anathoth from Hanamel his cousin who was to come to him in the prison and ask him to buy it.¹ Hanamel came and Jeremiah bought the field as God had commanded him. He had the deeds made out. But Jeremiah had done this against his better judgment. He had acted in faith and quick obedience. He no doubt reasoned that he would soon be taken captive to Babylon with the rest of the people and would never get to use the field. But when his perplexity was at its height, Jeremiah prayed! He asked God the reason for this command,² after having adored God in prayer.³ God heard and answered the loyal prophet. He told Jeremiah that

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1. Ibid., 32:7.
2. Ibid., 32:24-25.
3. Ibid., 32:16-23.

houses and fields would again be purchased in Judah.¹
Thus, Jeremiah's great loyalty was used of God to illustrate that the Jews would return to Judah. Such loyalty is needed by modern youth of the twentieth century!

2. His Fearlessness in Crises.

a. Personal.

Jeremiah's fellow-ministers at Anathoth, his birthplace, attempted to kill the true preacher of God's word. They deliberately planned to slay the troubler:

"...Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be no more remembered."²

All of this planning went on behind the scenes for Jeremiah did not know about it until God revealed it to him.³ Was Jeremiah afraid? No! He went immediately to God in prayer as any young person should do today in a similar situation. He did not pray a long prayer, but he prayed in faith that God would judge these wicked preachers.⁴ God answered immediately that this judgment was his will.⁵

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1. Ibid., 32:44.
2. Ibid., 11:19b.
3. Ibid., 11:18.
4. Ibid., 11:20.
5. Ibid., 11:21-23.

Jeremiah showed his fearlessness in even a greater way in the temple at Jerusalem. He had preached a brief sermon on "Shiloh."¹ He told the worshippers in the temple that if they did not repent, Jerusalem would become like Shiloh. Shiloh had been a city in Ephraim in the days of Samuel where the ark of the covenant had been kept.² It was carried into battle against the Philistines and was never restored to Shiloh.³ Thus, Shiloh became a national disgrace. Jeremiah had used fighting words! The priests, prophets, all the people grabbed him, shouting: "Thou shalt surely die!" After a few minutes of excitement, they repeated the charge: "This man is worthy of death!" Then without fear, Jeremiah gave his authority:

"Jehovah sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard."⁴

Then he called the bloodthirsty mob to repent of sins and return to God. What great courage! He told them that they could kill him if they wished, but that certain punishment would come upon them! Then the people arose to his defence and saved his life. Any young person can look

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1. Ibid., 25:4-6.
2. I Samuel 4:3-4.
3. Ibid., 4:10, 11 and 22.
4. Jeremiah 26:12.

to this great incident in the life of Jeremiah if he needs more courage. But it must be remembered that Jeremiah's courage came from his surrender to God, as courage comes to the young person of today.

Jeremiah showed his fearlessness in the three imprisonments which he endured for speaking the truth of God's message. The first imprisonment¹ came as a result of preaching the sermon on "The Broken Bottle."² A fellow-minister put him in the stocks overnight, but in the morning Jeremiah told him God's word in frank language. The second imprisonment³ came because of the charge against Jeremiah of collaboration with the Chaldeans. During this imprisonment, Zedekiah made his third inquiry. Jeremiah told him the truth and boldly pled for his life.⁴

The third imprisonment⁵ sent Jeremiah to the muddy dungeon where he had been once before. The charge brought against him was that he was breaking the morale of the fighting forces.⁶ He had merely been obedient to

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1. Ibid., 20:2.
2. Jeremiah 19.
3. Ibid., 37:15.
4. Ibid., 37:18-21.
5. Ibid., 38:6.
6. Ibid., 38:4.

God in telling the people to submit to the power of Babylon. Persecution for doing the right is especially gruelling as youth find now. Jeremiah fearlessly endured the horrors of the dungeon until he was taken out by Ebedmelech, a colored man, who was an Ethiopian.¹

During the times that Jeremiah's life was threatened, and during his three imprisonments, he showed his great fearlessness. This is a quality that is needed in the lives of young people of the twentieth century! They too can receive it by doing God's will and surrendering their lives to him completely.

b. National Crises.

Jeremiah's fearlessness in national crises was shown both at the fall of Jerusalem, and after the fall, as well as at other times. To see his courage at its height during the fall, the four inquiries of the king will be discussed. Through all of the four inquiries by King Zedekiah, Jeremiah was a fearless man! He gave the king the same answer over and over, in spite of the fact that the king wanted another answer that would be pleasing.

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1. Ibid., 38:7-13.

The first inquiry came after Nebuchadrezzar had started the war against Jerusalem. Zedekiah sent messengers to Jeremiah, saying:

"Inquire, I pray thee of Jehovah for us; for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon maketh war against us: peradventure Jehovah will deal with us according to¹ all his wondrous works, that he may go up from us."

Jeremiah, who was not in prison as yet, answered that Jerusalem would be captured by the Chaldeans. Many of the Jews in it were to die from disease, the sword, and the famine. Zedekiah and many of those people remaining would be carried into Babylon as exiles. Jeremiah showed no fear at all in this first inquiry!

Jeremiah further showed his fearlessness in the second inquiry. Zedekiah sent a messenger to Jeremiah, saying: "Pray now unto Jehovah our God for us."² Jeremiah was not in prison at this time. Zedekiah had great hopes of victory over the Chaldeans for they had temporarily withdrawn from the city for fear of Pharaoh's armies. Then God's word came to the fearless preacher. Jeremiah told the messenger to tell the king the sad news that Pharaoh's armies would not help Jerusalem, but would return

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1.Ibid., 21:2.

2.Ibid., 37:3.

to Egypt. But the Chaldeans were to return and take the city and burn it. Jeremiah's fearlessness gave him a firm purpose and poise, which every young person today is entitled to possess.

The third inquiry of the king came when Jeremiah was in prison the second time.¹ This was in the dark, muddy dungeon. But when Zedekiah wanted to talk to Jeremiah in secret, he had him removed from the dungeon. Then in secret, Zedekiah inquired: "Is there any word from Jehovah?"² Then looking the wicked, rebellious king straight in the eye, Jeremiah abruptly answered:

"There is...Thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon."³

Even at this tense moment, when the king was expecting a pleasing answer, Jeremiah had the courage to tell him what God had instructed him. Young people are often urged to say the pleasant word, instead of the true word of their convictions, but if they follow Jeremiah, success will come to them in their Christian walk with God.

The fourth inquiry came when the military situation was getting more intense moment by moment. Many Jews

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1. Ibid., 37:15.
2. Ibid., 37:17.
3. Ibid.

were starving; others had dreadful diseases. The Chaldeans were around the city on every side. Jeremiah was in prison for the third time.¹ It was the miry dungeon in which he found himself. But a short time before the fourth inquiry, Ebed-melech had taken Jeremiah from the dungeon and had put him in the court prison. Then Zedekiah talked to Jeremiah in private: "I will ask thee a thing; hide nothing from me."² Jeremiah gave the king essentially the same answer that he had given to him the other three times. The king did not appreciate it. It made him angry, but Jeremiah knew that he was in God's will. All of these four inquiries point to one thing that is needed in every Christian young person today--fearlessness! Fear is one of the greatest problems of youth today, especially the fear that come in witnessing for Christ and truth. But in Jeremiah's life is found the answer to this problem of fear that is so great in the lives of youth.

Jeremiah also showed his fearlessness after the fall of Jerusalem. He had been given his choice to go to Babylon and have sufficient to eat and to wear, or to remain in Judah with the poor Jews.³ He chose the latter.

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1. Ibid., 38:6.
2. Ibid., 38:14.
3. Ibid., 40:4.

But while he was with the remaining Jews, a serious situation developed. Gedaliah, who had been appointed governor by Babylon, was killed by Ishmael.¹ Johanan arose to take Gedaliah's place. Then Johanan and all the people came to Jeremiah to ask him to pray to God for them for his will. They all promised to do as God commanded.² After ten days of prayer, Jeremiah told them that it was God's will to stay in Judah. It was bold of him for he knew that they wanted to go to Egypt. But they accused him of being a liar and went into Egypt as they had planned. Jeremiah went with the rebellious Johanan and the people and continued to preach repentance to them. He did not fear one of them for he was living in God's will. He knew that he had the Divine approval upon his words:

Jeremiah possessed a fearlessness in personal and national crises that can meet the problem of fear in the heart of the young person in the twentieth century. They too receive it by surrendering heart and mind to God, and letting him lead them. Youth should realize that freedom from fear comes only through the grace of God received in prayer. That was the way in which Jeremiah received it.

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1. Ibid., 41:2.
2. Ibid., 42:6.

3. His Human Relations.

a. With His Family.

Modern youth have great difficulty in having peaceful relations with the rest of the family. They cannot agree. They think that the rest of the family is "running over" them. Many times, and usually, youth is at fault. But in Jeremiah's life, his friction with his family came through no fault of his own! He spoke God's truth, because he was obedient, and on account of his his family tried to kill him.¹ They were from Anathoth, Jeremiah's home town. The issue at stake was that Jeremiah was speaking in the name of the Lord. These wicked members of the family wanted him to speak pleasant words. They wished him to compromise his witness for God. This problem of failing to witness to the grace of God is one of the greatest problems that is faced by modern Christian youth! Perhaps their failure at this point is greater than at any other. Very few of them, at least in America, have been threatened with death by their family, but they even surrender their witness for lesser persecutions than death. The answer to this great problem is found in the life of witness that was Jeremiah's!

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1. Ibid., 11:18-23 and 12:6.

In contrast to this bitter experience, Jeremiah had a pleasant one with Hanamel, his cousin, his uncle's son.¹ Jeremiah purchased the field at Anathoth from him when he came to the prison. Hanamel did not oppose Jeremiah, but rather there were peaceful relations between them. All is not hard and unpleasant for youth who are living the Christian life. There are times of happy relations with the members of the family even though at times they may oppose the one who is standing true for Christ and right living.

b. With His Friends.

One of the first questions that young people propose today when they are asked to follow Christ is: "If we do follow Christ will we have any friends?" And it is a question that youth leaders must answer correctly and honestly. Did Jeremiah have any friends? Yes, but he also had enemies who were greater in number than his friends. It must be remembered that Jesus had enemies. But on the other hand, Jesus has friends the world around

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1. Ibid., 32:5-16.

who are ready to lay down their lives for him. Let us notice some of Jeremiah's friends.

Jeremiah's friends helped him at the time of the "Shiloh Sermon."¹ His life had been threatened by the priests, the prophets, and the people because of his fearless and pointed message. The priests and the prophets clamored for his blood. They angrily said: "Thou shalt surely die." Jeremiah boldly defended himself, and the people who were his friends arose to his defence.² They said that he should live because he had spoken God's word.

A good friend also on this occasion was Ahikam. We do not have any mention of his helping Jeremiah elsewhere. But God had provided this good friend to defend Jeremiah on this important occasion.³

Baruch, Jeremiah's private secretary, was also a good friend of Jeremiah, and he remained with him to the end. This is the type of friend that young people need today. And they are more certain of getting such a friend if they follow the Christian way. Baruch took

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1. Ibid., 26:4-7.
2. Ibid., 26:16.
3. Ibid., 26:24.

dictation from Jeremiah in preparing the book of Jeremiah. Baruch even went to the temple to read one of Jeremiah's sermons to the worshippers in the temple in Jerusalem who were sinful people.¹ This was a real test of friendship. Baruch is again mentioned at the time of the purchase of the field at Anathoth² which was twenty years after the temple incident above. Baruch went with Jeremiah to Egypt for he was a true friend to the end. Young people today will have genuine friends like Baruch, if they will follow Christ, and make him the best Friend.

Ebed-melech was a true friend of Jeremiah. He was the colored man from Ethiopia who delivered Jeremiah out of the dungeon.³ He went boldly to the king and received permission to take Jeremiah out of the dungeon and save his life. A true friend today given by God can save the lives of many persons in other ways. The most genuine friends in the world are the ones that God gives.

Nebuchadrezzar and his Chief of Staff were friends of Jeremiah.⁴ This friendship may have been based on wrong motives on the part of these two men, for they

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1. Ibid., 36:6.
2. Ibid., 32:12, 3, and 16.
3. Ibid., 38:4-13.
4. Ibid., 39:11-14 and 40:1-6.

had shown themselves friends to Jeremiah because he had told the Jews during the war to surrender to Babylon. He had done this because God had instructed him to do it. Nevertheless, the Chief of Staff treated him as a friend when he came to Judah.¹ He gave him a choice to go to Babylon or to stay in Judah.² Jeremiah remained in Judah.

Jeremiah's human relations with his friends have been seen as pleasant and cordial. God had provided him with them that life would not be totally disagreeable. Yes, Jeremiah had friends and they were, for the most part, true friends. And God gives to modern youth who will follow him true and faithful friends who are Christians. But above all, God gives to youth the best Friend, Jesus.

c. With His Fellow-Ministers.

Whether youth plan to preach, to teach, or to engage in other vocations, they will find opposition among some of their colleagues if they stand firm for Christ. In any vocation today they will find many compromisers who are living half-heartedly for Jesus Christ. Let us look to Jeremiah to find the answer to this. He

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1. Ibid., 39:11-14.
2. Ibid., 40:4.

was one of a few true prophets of his day. Most of them were false and told the people lies; the priests were equally corrupt. Jeremiah denounced these false leaders in harsh terms.¹ All through his ministry, Jeremiah was opposed by these false religious leaders. They even tried to kill him on at least two occasions.² Another put him in the stocks for preaching a frank sermon.³ But Jeremiah was true to God and his convictions. He never wavered from standing true to God. Young people today in any group will many times find opposition to the Christian way of living. It is almost unavoidable. But by God's grace, they can stand true as did Jeremiah. They can stand head and shoulders above their colleagues in Christ-like everyday living.

d. With the People.

Jeremiah preached against the sins of the people continually. He always warned them of the judgment to come unless they repented of their sins. His attitude toward the people is best shown in one verse:

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1. Ibid., 23:9-40
2. Ibid., 11:19-23 and 26:8, 11.
3. Ibid., 20:1-6.

"But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone."¹

Naturally, Jeremiah was not popular with the people for his message was not pleasing. All through his life the people opposed him. Perhaps they showed their friendship on at least one occasion when they saved his life in the temple from the fury of the priests.² During the fall of Jerusalem, when he told them to surrender to Babylon, they would not obey. After the fall when he told them not to go to Egypt, they rebelled, and called him a liar, and went. Nor can youth today be popular with all the people today if they would live for Christ. Jesus has said that the righteous will suffer persecution all through the Christian life. "Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."³

4. His Prayer Life.

Jeremiah's whole life was a life of prayer. He found prayer as necessary as food, air, and water. Jeremiah prayed daily for many different types of needs. No-

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1. Ibid., 5:23.
2. Ibid., 26:16.
3. Matthew 5:10.

thing was too large or too small. He prayed when he was in doubt, trouble, sorrow, joy, thankfulness, and prosperity. He prayed much in secret but little is known of his public prayer life. He adored and worshipped God. He confessed his own sins and the sins of the people. He prayed for justice to be given to his enemies, and the priests who opposed him were the subjects of his imprecatory prayers.

a. In General Situations.

Jeremiah on one occasion reminded God of the sinful condition of the people.¹ He also did this on other occasions. It was common for Jeremiah to talk to God about the dreadful spiritual conditions of the people of his day. Jeremiah, in one of his sermons, told the people in the temple of the weakness of idols.² Then he withdrew to a place of secret prayer and adored the true God for his greatness.³ Again Jeremiah adored God for his superiority over idols.⁴ This was a common experience for the prophet of the heart for he hated idols and loved God.

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1. Jeremiah 5:3.
2. Ibid., 10:1-11.
3. Ibid., 10:6-7.
4. Ibid., 16:19-20

Jeremiah prayed against the foreign nations that opposed God¹ as well as against his own nation. He also prayed against his persecutors in Judah.² He asked God to bring judgment upon them for their sins. This is difficult to understand in the light of the teachings of Christ, unless it is assumed that most of the people against whom the prayers were directed were hopeless. On the other hand, it must be remembered that the God of love is also the God of wrath. It is known too that on a few occasions, God asked Jeremiah to refuse to pray for the people any more.³ God's mercy is only upon them who will obey him, but when people persistently and continually reject his love, his wrath is poured out. Young people today who are not Christians should remember this great truth. They should be urged to accept God's love and mercy, lest they are forced to accept his wrath.

b. In Specific Situations.

When Jeremiah was called to become a prophet unto the nations, he cried out to Jehovah in true humility:

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1. Ibid., 10:23-25.
2. Ibid., 15:15-18.
3. Ibid., 7:16, 11:14, and 14:11.

"Ah, Lord Jehovah! behold, I know not how to speak; for I am a child."¹

Since that time God has called thousands of young people to serve him. He is calling youth today to serve his kingdom. Many youth now, when God calls them to do service, pray similar prayers of true humility if they are sincerely humble. They realize that they are inadequate without the power of God. Jeremiah's exclamation at the time of his call is true to human nature today. It is typical of the reaction of youth of the modern age.

Jeremiah's life was threatened by his own family.²

Today young people are sometimes threatened with the deprivation of family relationship if they serve Christ. Occasionally they are threatened with death. The natural thing for them to do under such conditions is to pray. This was exactly what Jeremiah did when his life was at stake.³ In prayer he found a source of strength to remain true and brave. He prayed for protection and God always answered his prayer. God answers prayer today in the same way for youth who are suffering for the cause of Christ.

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1. Ibid., 1:6.
2. Ibid., 11:18-23.
3. Ibid., 11:20 and 12:1-6.

When Jeremiah preached the sermon that he learned from God in the potter's house,¹ the people became angry and planned to kill him.² They did not want Jeremiah to say that Israel was to be destroyed in the hands of the Potter, nor did they care to be reminded of their sins. As soon as his life had been threatened by the people, Jeremiah prayed to God.³ He knew that he was innocent and had obediently delivered God's message. Youth of modern times, as Jeremiah, will find that the hardest type of persecution to endure is that which is given for being innocent. This is the type that Christ endured, and he is thus able to give strength to youth to stand for him.

Jeremiah prayed after his first prison experience.⁴ He had been released before he had offered the prayer. But even after the release his heart was heavy and sorrowful. He had been made a laughing-stock by his fellow-ministers. Young people today in high schools and other public schools are subjected to the same ridicule by their friends for standing true to Christ! The writer has experienced it in a public high school.

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1. Ibid., 18:1-17.
2. Ibid., 18:18.
3. Ibid., 18:19-23.
4. Ibid., 20:7-8.

During a drought Jeremiah confessed the sins of the people.¹ He included himself by the use of "we." Youth leaders today will find themselves confessing their own sins and the sins of those whom they lead. Youth themselves, under proper leadership, can be challenged to confess their sins so that they might have fellowship with Christ. A true prayer of confession will go far in solving the problems of modern youth. Youth are responsive to the call of repentance, and should be given opportunities to confess their sins and accept Christ.

During this same drought, Jeremiah prayed for rain.² He believed that rain had been withheld because of the sins of the people which he confessed to God. This prayer for rain will not mean much to city youth, but it will mean a great deal to rural youth in localities where there is not enough rain. Under such conditions people naturally pray for rain for the crops. Jeremiah's faith was simple and he believed God for the great things and the small things. Youth can learn much from such a man of faith!

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1. Ibid., 14:7-9 and 19-21.

2. Ibid., 14:22.

Jeremiah was commanded by God to buy the field at Anathoth.¹ He was in prison and did not have excessive money, but he obeyed God and purchased the field from Hanamel, his cousin, who had come to him at the prison. But Jeremiah was perplexed! He did not understand why he should have had to buy this field. It was unreasonable! For the fall of Jerusalem was near, and he reasoned that he would never have the use of the field for he had been preaching that everyone was to be carried to Babylon. As soon as Hanamel left, Jeremiah offered a prayer of adoration to God at the end of which he asked God the reason for the command.² God answered him by saying that the Jews would eventually return and buy houses and fields in Judah again.³ God works the same today with youth. He sometimes calls them to do things that are humanly unreasonable, but which have a great purpose in the mind of God. However, in the course of time, the things that are unreasonable to young people become reasonable to them when they pray to God and ask his will. God will surely answer the inquiry of the youth who come to him for help.

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1. Ibid., 32:6-7.
2. Ibid., 32:16-25.
3. Ibid., 32:44.

Jeremiah prayed at the second inquiry of the king.¹ It was an important question concerning the military situation. Jeremiah wanted God's will and his answer. How modern youth can learn from this! When they are asked questions of importance by a friend or any one, they can always answer best if they pray first. This was Jeremiah's policy and he was a success in real living. He believed in taking everything to God in prayer.

When the people wanted to go to Egypt after the fall of Jerusalem, they came to Jeremiah to ask him advice. Jeremiah prayed for ten days! This is the longest time recorded that he prayed at one time. He knew that it was vitally important that he give them God's answer. God's word came to him to give to the people after ten days of intensive prayer.²

Jeremiah's life was a life of prayer! He prayed for all of his needs both great and small. He believed that God heard and answered his prayers. He was so intimate with God that he questioned him and argued with him. Jeremiah was a success in his walk with God because of his prayer life! Youth now can be a success also!

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1. Ibid., 37:3,6.

2. Ibid., 42:7.

D. Summary

The use of the life of Jeremiah with young people of the twentieth century has been forcefully shown. His everyday life was seen as an example for young people to follow. It was shown that his call as a youth was similar in basic essentials to the calls that youth receive today from God. It was pointed out that God prepares those youth whom he calls as he prepared Jeremiah by assurance and by communion with himself. Jeremiah was seen as a man loyal to God under almost all circumstances. This loyalty was related to the needs of youth for loyalty and devotion to God. Jeremiah's fearlessness was declared to be a solution for the problem of fear today in young people. In his human relations, Jeremiah was opposed by his fellow-ministers, the people, and the kings, but he did have a few friends. Last of all the values for youth in Jeremiah's prayer life were uncovered. Jeremiah was portrayed throughout as a man of daily prayer and devotion to God. The use of the biography of Jeremiah for youth today has untold values. For Jeremiah closely resembled Christ!

CHAPTER III
THE USE OF THE
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A. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to show the spiritual values in the devotional passages in Jeremiah that will aid in solving the devotional problems of young people. Youth are constantly in need of new and vital devotional material that will stimulate them and cause them to go forward in the Christian faith. The lack of suitable material accounts in some measure for the neglect of young people in their devotional life. Sometimes this neglect is total! It is believed that the teachings reflected in the devotional passages in Jeremiah will help to solve this great problem. It is hoped that the same young people will be able to find in Jeremiah something that will challenge their lives, and will cause them to develop the devotional habit. On the other hand, there are also problems in public devotions for youth. In many cases public devotions in group meetings of young people and in the Sunday School become mechanical and uninteresting. In some cases the material at hand is to blame.

It is hoped that the passages in Jeremiah will help to meet this need in public devotions of young people as well as in private ones. The material to be presented can be use under many situations, and is adaptable to almost any group of young people. Something challenging can be gained from Jeremiah for both private and public devotions.

B. For Private Devotions

1. On Faith.

Jeremiah lived by faith as young people must do today! However, it is interesting to note that the word "faith" is not to be found in the book. But still in the life of Jeremiah, faith was actively at work in guiding him all through his great career. Jeremiah's faith was practical! On one occasion as recorded, he even prayed for rain.¹ The famine was severe in Judah. The ground was dry and cracked, there was no grass for the cattle, and the people were without food. Jeremiah believed that this drought was punishment from God for the wickedness of the people. Thus, he confessed the sins of the people.² He pleaded for forgiveness. Then he believed that he was

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1. Ibid., 14:22.
2. Ibid., 14:19-21.

justified in asking for rain. He told God that no one else could bring the rain. How practical was the faith of Jeremiah! Young people today can learn from this that faith can be used for everyday needs.

Jeremiah also had faith for guidance. One year before the fall of Jerusalem, he was in prison because Zedekiah in his anger had put him there.¹ God spoke to Jeremiah and told him that his cousin Hanamel would come to him and ask him to purchase a field for cash at Anathoth. Hanamel came as God said he would. Jeremiah did not understand why he was to buy the field, even though it was a custom for a near relative to buy land from another relative² but he bought it from Hanamel, paying cash for it. Why should Jeremiah buy the field? He could never use it. From his point of view, he would soon be carried away to Babylon for seventy years. As it was, he went to Egypt after the fall so he never had use of the field. Thus, from Jeremiah's point of view and from ours, it was unreasonable for him to buy the field! But Jeremiah acted in faith and obeyed. God explained to him later that

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1. Jeremiah 32.
2. Leviticus 25:25.

houses and fields would again be bought in Judah after the return. God today may ask young people to do things that are unreasonable. They can profit by this experience of Jeremiah and act on simple faith even in spite of the unreasonableness of the command. Young people can learn from this that obedience and simple faith are absolutely necessary for the Christian although he may have other spiritual qualities.

2. On Love.

When young people think of love, usually many faces of their friends of the opposite sex flash before their imagination. Love for many young people is something unstable and sentimental. Love today is used loosely to denote affection for people, dogs, hats, and new dresses. Let us look to see Jeremiah's idea of love. At once we are appalled by the fact that "love" is mentioned but once in the entire book!¹ How do we know then that Jeremiah knew anything about love? As we read the book from beginning to end, we find that the love of God is a golden cord running throughout the book. Yes, the love of God for the nations and for individuals is demonstrated.

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1. Jeremiah 31:3.

The only passage that contains the word "love" denotes the changlessness of love. Customs and traditions may change, but God's love cannot change, for it is eternal. Young people can be challenged by nothing greater than the changeless love of God! The love that existed in Jeremiah's time, exists today for young people around the world. Another passage also shows the changelessness of God's love, although the word "love" is not mentioned.¹

The call of Jeremiah demonstrates the universality of God's love.² Here a young man was called as a prophet to the nations. He was to speak the message of God's love to both Jews and Gentiles. It was not to be limited to a few select Jews. This message of love was to be for all mankind!

Still another aspect of God's love is shown.³ Because God is a God of love, he also is a God of justice. He has such great love that it causes him to be just and to measure out to every man his proper reward tempered by mercy. Many young people conceive of God as being so possessed with love that he does not exact justice. But

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1. Ibid., 33:11.
2. Ibid., 1:5, 10.
3. Ibid., 9:23-24.

this passage tells young people of today the contrary.

The love of God was shown by the way in which he tried to prevent the destruction of Jerusalem. He constantly warned the people through Jeremiah to repent that they might see their city and themselves saved from destruction, but they would not pay attention and obey.

God's love was manifest by Jeremiah in Egypt when he pled for the people to repent and return to God. God also loved those who were carried to Babylon, and he promised them a safe return to the homeland after seventy years. His promise was fulfilled because of his love.

3. On Hope.

Hope is exceedingly great in Jeremiah! He gave much hope to those who would repent of their sins and come to God. Today young people must have this same hope. It gives them courage to live and to know that life is worth living. Jeremiah expressed his hope in the greatest measure in the "New Covenant" passage.¹ The Jews had been taken captive to Babylon; Jeremiah gave to them a message of hope from God. He told them that there was

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1. Ibid., 31:31-34.

going to be a new covenant for Judah, Israel, and the world. This new covenant was to be written on the mind and on the heart, rather than on tables of stone as given to Moses on the mountain. This new covenant came through Christ. Each young person looks forward to this new covenant until its benefits become a reality in his own life through the cleansing presence of Christ. There is hope in the new covenant because it brings to men release from the power of sin. This passage in Jeremiah is the highest mountain peak of hope in the entire book! For the fulfillment of this hope all the world was waiting. Then Christ came as a babe, grew up, died on the cross, and arose from the dead. Ever since that time the new covenant has been effective to remove sin from the heart of man. This is the hope of the new covenant for each young person of the modern age and for all the ages to come!

In two other passages the Messianic hope is strong.¹ Each passage mentions the branch of righteousness who is to come. His name by interpretation was to be: "Jehovah our righteousness." Jeremiah's hope becomes the hope of each individual who has not as yet accepted Christ.

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1. Ibid., 23:5-6 and 33:14-15.

4. On Witnessing.

One of the great values of private devotions for young people is that it prepares them to witness for Christ. Only as they are filled with the Spirit are they able to give out for the cause of Christ. When Christ comes into the heart of a young person, he immediately wants to witness to the love of Christ in forgiving his sins. The best place to prepare for witnessing is in the secret closet in communion with God. Some of the best materials in the Bible for this type of meditation are to be found in Jeremiah!

Jeremiah fervently exclaimed that if he would not witness there would be a burning fire in his heart and that he would become tired by keeping silent.¹ It was almost impossible for him to keep quiet about God because he had met God in a personal way. What caused Jeremiah to make so great an utterance? He had preached the "Broken Bottle" sermon.² As a result a priest put him in the stocks over night, releasing him in the morning. Jeremiah, as any young person today, was tempted to keep quiet about God. He must have reasoned that if he kept quiet, he would

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1. Ibid., 20:9.

2. Ibid., chapter 119.

be free; if he witnessed, he might be put back in prison for a longer period. He chose to tell the priest in harsh terms the judgment of God. He began by saying: "Thus saith Jehovah." After talking to the priest, he prayed to God and exclaimed:

"And if I say, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name, then there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones,¹ and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain."¹

Yes, Jeremiah was a true and faithful witness!

God gave Jeremiah further assurance for witnessing in two great passages.² If Jeremiah needed this assurance, young people today need it also! And they can receive it from God by being faithful in prayer. Jeremiah was human as youth are now, and he had his weak points and at times he needed assurance greatly. Because of this assurance, Jeremiah knew that witnessing for God was worthwhile. How this assurance from God must have strengthened the courage of Jeremiah! Here is one of the great passages:

"Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them."³

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1. Ibid., 20:9.
2. Ibid., 5:14 and 23:29.
3. Ibid., 5:14.

Youth today can claim this promise as their own for assurance needed for a living witness. But they must remember that witnessing is done by living as well as by speaking. In the second great passage, young people can gain further assurance for the great task of witnessing:

"Is not my word like fire? saith Jehovah; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"¹

Yes, Jeremiah was a great witness for God, and youth now should be challenged by his life to witness for Christ.

5. On Courage.

Jeremiah showed his great courage throughout his life! Indeed he was courageous to preach for over forty years to a stubborn and rebellious people. It required courage for him to face bloodthirsty mobs and speak God's truth to them. How did Jeremiah receive such bravery? He received it through fellowship with God in prayer, for Jeremiah had a well-developed devotional life. One single instance showed the courage of Jeremiah better than any other in the book. Jeremiah went to the temple to preach to the "Shiloh Sermon"² at the command of God. He told the worshippers that had come to the temple that if they did

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1. Ibid., 23:29.
2. Ibid., 26:4-7.

not repent of their sins, Jerusalem and the temple would become as Shiloh. Shiloh in the time of Samuel was the home of the ark of the covenant, but became a national disgrace after the ark was removed.¹ Thus, Jeremiah was using fighting words! The prophets and the priests immediately clamored for his blood! They wanted to rid themselves of such a liar! Jeremiah defended himself without fear. He told the people and the priests and all the others to repent of their sins. He told them to kill him if they pleased but that certain punishment would surely come upon them because he had spoken to them in the name of God. Jeremiah's invitation to death brought an immediate response from the people who arose to the defence of an innocent man, and prevented him from being killed. We also read of an individual who aided Jeremiah:

"But the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death."²

Jeremiah's courage was again shown in the answer that he gave to Pashhur.³ Jeremiah had preached the "Broken Bottle" sermon in the valley of Hinnom. This sermon made Pashhur angry, so he put Jeremiah in the stocks for

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1. I Samuel 4:1-11, 21-22.
2. Jeremiah 26:24.
3. Ibid., 20:1-6.

a night. Jeremiah was not concerned with his freedom. But he was concerned with God's will and message. So he delivered to Pashhur a stirring message calling him a lying prophet and telling him that his burial would be that of an ass. Jeremiah's courage arose to a great height on this occasion.

C. For Public Devotions

1. For Group Meetings of Young People.

a. Thanksgiving.

A service of thanksgiving could be produced by using two passages in Jeremiah.¹ Young people could use these at the holiday of thanksgiving, at the close of war, for thanking God for the return of young men and women from the service, or for a service of thanksgiving for the safe return of missionaries. These two passages have great possibilities because they touch the springs of youth--thankfulness! Youth leaders will find that young people will respond readily to these two passages.

The first passage could be used in a thanksgiving program to set the atmosphere. A young person

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1. Ibid., 20:13 and 33:10-11.

could repeat it emphatically at the beginning of the service. It could be used as the call to worship. The second passage could be read as a scripture lesson by a young person from the group. In this passage there is presented a great picture: destruction and restoration. Judah had been destroyed, and the people had been carried away to Babylon, but Jeremiah was foretelling that the Jews would return to Judah and build it up. At that time there was to be great joy, gladness, and thanksgiving. The night of horror was to be ended and peace was to come! How well this could be used today by young people for a service of thanksgiving for the return of missionaries from the war-torn areas of the world. Youth leaders should always be alert to have youth thank God in a public service for the great benefits that he sends. This passage is especially fine for youth because it emphasizes not only thanksgiving to God, but also his unchanging love. Many other uses can be made of this great passage and also the first one.

b. Christmas.

Who would ever imagine that a Christmas program could be based on Jeremiah? There are three passages

at least that are appropriate. The first is the passage
on the new covenant.¹ We know, of course, that the new
covenant came through Christ. First of all to make an
effective Christmas service, one would need to put him-
self in the place of Jeremiah who had looked for a cove-
nant written on the heart, not on stone. He had looked
for something that would make it possible for people to
live righteous lives. Secondly, we would necessarily
need to think of the new covenant being fulfilled in
the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. One
could read from Hebrews 8 on the new covenant. In this
type of a Christmas program, the sweep of history would
reveal to young people the greatness of God in fulfilling
the hope of the new covenant in Jesus Christ. The entire
book of Jeremiah points forward to Jesus, but the new
covenant is the highest mountain peak in the whole book
for here the Messianic hope is the greatest.

The last two passages could be used together.²
Or they could be combined with the new covenant passage.
The latter suggestion would probably be preferable for in

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1. Ibid.; 31:31-34.
2. Ibid., 23:5-6 and 33:14-16.

all three passages combined, the total picture of Jeremiah's Messianic hope is given. The chief value in the last two passages is that they emphasize the righteousness of Christ. The Jewish people had always looked forward to a Messiah. Some of the people did not necessarily think of him as being a holy person. But Jeremiah did, and young people today who know Christ are convinced that he is perfect, and that when he was here on earth, he was sinless. Perhaps the name of the program could be taken from these passages--"Jesus and the New Covenant" or "Jesus--The Righteous." Such a program could easily lead up to the scene of the babe in the manger as the fulfillment of God's promise. Young people could learn from such a program the plan of God in sending Christ into the world. Such a program would be exceptionally good for Jewish youth of the present.

c. Missions.

Jeremiah was a missionary to the whole world! For we know that when God called him he appointed him a missionary to all the nations of the world. The fulfillment of this is clearly seen in the book itself. Jeremiah not only prophesied concerning Judah and Israel, but also

concerning many of the surrounding nations of the day.¹
Since that time, his message has gone to all the world!
And truly it has come to young people of today over all
the world! They too can receive a missionary call as did
Jeremiah. They too can receive the spirit of reaching out
to all the world.

The call of Jeremiah could be used as a scrip-
ture reading at a missions service or rally.² It could
be used as a basis for an entire program for a service
on missions for young people today. Let it be remembered
that Jeremiah was a young man at the time of his call to
serve the world! The call of Jeremiah was life-centered
for it touched the springs of life. God told Jeremiah that
even before he was born, he was called to be a prophet
unto the nations. Many young people have the idea that
they can plan their own lives and that God must approve
their plans. But God plans their lives and they must
approve of his plan! Youth of the present can be chal-
lenged to go to the mission field through the influence of
this passage under the inspiration of the Spirit of God.

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1. Ibid., chapters 46-51.

2. Ibid., 1:1-10, 17-19.

d. Consecration.

Consecration to duty is the necessary quality for anyone who succeeds in secular endeavor. How much more necessary it is for Christian youth of the modern age if they are to succeed for Christ! Jeremiah lived a consecrated life. On the Sabbath? Yes. On the week days? Yes. All of the time, he lived a life of deep consecration to God. Young people need a greater consecration today than ever before! The task of reconstruction of men's spirits is tremendous. Youth sometimes become careless about their duties toward God. They constantly need to be challenged to consecrate their thoughts, wills, and emotions to the service of God. A passage in Jeremiah that is invaluable¹ suited to this purpose is the story of the "Potter's House." From this passage young lives can learn that God is the Potter and that they are the clay in his hand. They will also learn that God is moulding their lives to serve him as long as their wills are yielded to him. They may be challenged not to miss the first plan of God for their lives, even though God has a second-best plan for he remakes them. This passage is indeed one rich in the thought of

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1. Ibid., 18:1-6.

consecration to God and his plan for life. Much poetry can be found in various sources to bear upon the idea of the potter and the clay. Also there is scripture in both the Old and the New Testaments in addition to that in Jeremiah.

Another passage in Jeremiah offers a supreme challenge to youth! It is a passage that can challenge the best in young people. The value in this passage is that it shows to youth that even though they have apparently done their best, they can still do better. Here is this challenging passage:

"If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and though in a land of peace thou art secure, yet how wilt thou do in the pride of the Jordan?"¹

In the previous chapter, Jeremiah's fellow-ministers at Anathoth had attempted to take his life. Jeremiah prayed to God about it and asked him why these wicked priests prospered so greatly. God replied to Jeremiah that he had yet to meet the more wicked priests at Jerusalem. God called the men at Anathoth "footmen" and the men at Jerusalem, "horses." Jeremiah had tired from running with footmen, but God told him that he would have to run fast

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1. Ibid., 12:5.

enough to keep up with horses. How this will challenge young people who think that they are doing their best when they are really not! It will arouse the best that is in them to action.

e. Evangelism.

Jeremiah is rich in passages on evangelism. Evangelism is a concentrated effort to bring people to a decision for Christ, either in public or private. These passages can be used as the basis for a program, a talk, as a scripture lesson, or for a sermon by the youth leader. These passages will go far in solving the public devotional problems of youth. This material is fresh and spontaneous! These passages through the inspiration of the Lord can aid in winning the loyalty of young people for Christ and the church. This passage is especially good for any young person who might be indifferent to the call of Christ:

"The harvest is¹ past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

Another passage is well-suited for showing to youth the folly of breaking promises with the Lord.² The

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1. Ibid., 8:20.

2. Ibid., 42:6 and 44:16-17.

time was after the fall of Jerusalem. The people who had not gone to Babylon had come to Jeremiah to ask for advice. They promised him and God that they would do as he told them. Jeremiah asked God for the answer during ten days of prayer. God told the people through Jeremiah to stay in Judah. But they people rebelled; they called Jeremiah a liar;¹ and they went to Egypt. They reminded Jeremiah that they would do as they pleased. For this constant rebellion, they were condemned by God to destruction in Egypt. They never returned to Judah, but died in disgrace and in their sins.

If young people are desirous of seeking a vital experience in Christ, the passage about seeking God with the whole heart is desirable.² Its value is in the fact that it shows that in order to have fellowship with God, complete surrender must be made. The whole personality must search for God. God promises fellowship to the young person who will seek him with the whole heart--soul, mind, and will.

Another passage is especially desirable for those

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1. Ibid., 43:2.
2. Ibid., 29:12-13.

young people who, though Christians, may be tainted with sin.¹ Jeremiah, as loyal as he was, became infested with sin. He had questioned the character of God.² God told him that he must "take the precious from the vile" that he might become like God. He told Jeremiah to return, and repent of his sins, and Jeremiah obeyed. What a lesson for youth of the modern age. This incident would make the basis for a strong evangelism directed toward bringing youth to Christ.

2. For Worship Services in the Sunday School.

a. Adoration of God.

Adoration is a part of the worship experience. Worship is best realized when a person receives a vision of God as did Isaiah.³ The goal of worship for young people in the Sunday School will always be to get a vision of God. The usual pattern of worship is the upward look, the inward look, and the outward look. Our particular concern now is the upward look--the adoration of God. Truly Jeremiah had this upward look! Young people must also have it if they are to live healthy Christian lives.

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1. Ibid., 15:19-21.

2. Ibid., 15:18:

3. Isaiah 6:1-8.

Jeremiah adored God because to him God was unique for there was not another like him.¹ For Jeremiah God arose far above the wise men of the world. God to him was great and mighty above all the gods of the earth that the foolish Jews and other peoples worshipped. A second passage shows the character of God.² Mankind is urged to adore God who loves the world, exacts justice, and desires righteousness. God delights himself in his activities. This passage will help young people to get a vision of the character of God. It will help them to see that a holy God desires young people of today to live clean and spotless lives.

In the third passage Jeremiah adored the power of God.³ The main thought of this prayer, which was prayed after Jeremiah had bought the field at Anathoth, is expressed in these words: "There is nothing too hard for thee." Jeremiah reminded God that he was the Creator of the heavens and the earth and that he exacted justice of all men. He reminded God of the great miracles which he performed in Egypt in delivering the children of Israel out of cap-

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1. Jeremiah 10:6-7.
2. Ibid.; 9:23-24.
3. Ibid., 32:16-23.

tivity. This prayer of adoration could very well serve as a model prayer for young people of the modern day. Jeremiah was in perplexity and doubt when he offered this prayer. Youth often have perplexities and doubts, but a certain way to be delivered from them is to worship God and seek his will as Jeremiah did so often.

b. The Sovereignty of God.

Jeremiah adored God because he believed in his greatness and sovereignty. He believed in the throne above every throne. One of the passages which best portrays the sovereignty of God is:

"A glorious throne, set on high from the beginning, is the place of our sanctuary."¹

Under what conditions did Jeremiah speak this? What caused him to see the throne? Judah was in a famine. The ground was dry and cracked, the grass was dried, and the people were exceedingly hungry. The king at this time was Jehoiakim, a wicked man. Most of the people were looking to him for the supply of their needs. They trusted in this sinful king and his throne to aid them during the famine. They looked to the throne at Jerusalem. But Jeremiah

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1. Ibid., 17:12.

looked to the heavenly throne! He believed that the God of the glorious throne was the hope of the world. Where do young people look for help today? Many of them during a time of need turn their eyes to the President of the United States or the Governor of their state. But, if they will only follow the example of Jeremiah, they will look to the glorious throne in prayer, and they will not be disappointed. If their Sunday School has a definite need, they can be certain that they can look to the throne of God and have that need supplied. Or if they have a personal spiritual need that need will be supplied by praying to the glorious throne of God.

Jeremiah believed in the sovereignty of God over nature.¹ God, he said, made the earth and the heavens by his power and wisdom. When he uttered his voice, the waters in the heavens roared. God makes the lightnings for the rain. He brings the winds out of his secret treasures. This passage could be used in connection with the study of nature. It is very well suited for a scripture lesson in the Sunday School or for a devotional talk. It will undergird the belief of young people in the God of nature.

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1. Ibid., 51:15-16.

c. Cleansing From Sin.

The occasion on which Jeremiah was cleansed from sin has already been mentioned. God gave Jeremiah the great invitation to be cleansed, and Jeremiah accepted it. How greatly is such an emphasis needed for youth in the Sunday School! Surely they need to be cleansed from their sins. For many of them this is the only opportunity that they may have to come into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ through cleansing from sin.

Many young people believe that they can sin and cover it up from their friends. Many times this can be done for a time, but God always knows and understands. Even other young people come to believe that they are not sinful even though they do wrong. The following passage meets these problems of youth. Jeremiah not only believed in the sinfulness of the heart, but in God's knowledge of it:

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt: who can know it? I, Jehovah, search the mind, I try the heart, even to give to every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings."¹

This passage deals with the inward look to see our sin

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1. Ibid., 17:9-10.

after we have seen God. The inward look is a great need in the worship service in the Sunday School. Sometimes the upward and the outward looks are over-emphasized to the exclusion of the inward look. But if youth is to serve, they must be cleansed from sin.

d. Praise.

Praise is an essential part of worship in the Sunday School for youth. Young people are naturally thankful, and it is well to channel this response in a worship service. There are many reasons for having a service of praise in the Sunday School. It may be for an answer to prayer that influences the entire group. It may be for the safe return of the young men and women from the service. Whatever may be the special reason, praise should be given to God. There are two passages in Jeremiah that could very well be used to praise God. The first one could set the atmosphere for the praise service:

"Sing unto Jehovah, praise ye Jehovah; for he hath delivered the soul of the needy from the hand of evil-doers."¹

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1. Ibid., 20:13.

The second passage could be used as the basis for an entire program, for a talk, or for a scripture reading.¹ There is portrayed destruction and then restoration. Then comes the thanksgiving for the restoration. Judah had been humbled, but she was to be restored. As a result of this she was to give thanks to God for his love and mercy. This passage is especially vivid because of "the voice of joy and the voice of gladness." This passage would find a ready response in the heart and mind of youth.

e. Conquest.

Many times the Sunday School lags. Young people become discouraged. They wonder what is the use to work so diligently. The services of worship may become mechanical and uninteresting. In brief, the entire Sunday School needs inspiration and motivation. The young people need to be challenged to pray for the needs of the Sunday School. The following passage lends itself well to meet this great need:

"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and will show thee great things, and difficult, which thou knowest not."²

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1. Ibid., 33:10-11.
2. Ibid., 33:3.

This passage will aid in furthering a conquest for Christ. It will cause youth to spring to action and pray as well work. It will challenge youth to do their best, rather than to try to get by with mere existence. This particular verse has been used as a key verse for Youth For Christ International.

D. Summary

The uses of the devotional passages for youth have been shown. For public devotions values were shown for group meetings of young people and for worship services in the Sunday School. These values were related to the devotional problems of young people of the present. In brief the devotional problems of private devotions were found to be neglect, lack of interest, and lack of good material. The problems in public devotions were shown to be the tendency to have the devotions become mechanical and uninteresting. It is believed that the devotional values in Jeremiah will aid in solving the devotional problems of young people in the twentieth century.

CHAPTER IV

THE USE OF THE SITUATIONS
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A. Introduction

Young people of the present sometimes believe that their problems belong only to them, and they fail to realize that their basic problems belonged to youth of other generations. Little do youth now understand that the basic problems of young people are timeless! These ageless problems are leadership, sin, the proper attitude toward national and international life, especially in regard to war. These problems were great in the lives of young people in the times of Jeremiah as they are now. It is the purpose of this chapter to find the uses for young people of the parallel conditions between the youth problems then and the ones today. The chief concern will be to find the lasting values in this parallel that will aid in solving the spiritual problems of modern youth. By the spiritual problems are meant sin, doubt, and perplexity. The solution for all of these can be aided by Jeremiah. The need of youth is great as indicated by the crime wave that is spearheading America under the

leadership of youth. J. Edgar Hoover of the Federal Bureau of Investigation declares that the peak age of crime today in America is only seventeen, including youth of both sexes.¹ With the tremendous spiritual needs of youth exposed, a solution for them will be found in part in Jeremiah.

B. The Youth Problems in the Time of Jeremiah

1. Leadership For Youth.

Leadership for youth is one of the greatest problems today confronting the church. Youth must have some type of qualified leadership. But it is a solemn fact that millions of modern youth throughout the world have the wrong leadership inside the church and also out of it. What can Jeremiah say that will help solve the problem of leadership for modern youth? Jeremiah warned against false leadership. But he also showed to the world a true leader in his own person. He remained a true leader of youth in spite of the fact that false leaders of youth were challenging thousands!

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1. J. Edgar Hoover, "The American Magazine, March, 1946, p. 23.

a. Warning Against False Leaders.

How modern youth need to be warned against false leaders! Youth today over all the world are following false leaders in the church as well as in secular life. Young people are being led by leaders of false religions and philosophies of life. Jeremiah warns youth now against false preachers. He knew a great deal about it for false preachers flourished in abundance in his time.

Jeremiah denounced them in harsh terms.¹ He exposed their lies and deceit. These leaders were not called by God, as was Jeremiah, but were self-appointed: "I sent not these prophets, yet they ran."²

Furthermore, they told lies to the people, the young and the old alike.³ Their message was smooth and pleasant. They never mentioned the specific sins of their congregations. They told the youth that they were getting along well in every way! Jeremiah summed up his charges against these false leaders of youth in these scathing words:

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1. Jeremiah 23:9-40.
2. Ibid., 23:21.
3. Ibid., 5:30-31.

"A wonderful and horrible thing is come to pass in the land: the prophets prophecy falsely...and my people love to have it so."¹

Jeremiah also warned against the false leaders of youth among the people.² These people were sinful and rebellious. God expressed his attitude toward them in these piercing words: "But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart."³ These wicked people had sinned against God deliberately and persistently from their youth, and they had led their children in the same footsteps. They were leading the youth away from God to serve and to worship the idols of gold and wood. Today people are leading young people waywardly to wrong ways of life. They are leading them to worship pleasure, money, and fame. The majority of people today represent in no way the type of leadership that is needed to lead youth any more than the people of Jeremiah's day. But Jeremiah was a true leader of youth!

b. An Example of a True Leader.

Jeremiah was a true leader of youth. And he is an example today of a youth leader for modern youth. He

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1. Ibid.,
2. Ibid., 3:24-25, 22:21, and 32:30.
3. Ibid., 5:23.

told the people to repent of their sins and to get right with God. He told them of the certain punishment that would come upon them if they failed to obey God. Without doubt some of the youth who heard him laughed and ridiculed him, but nevertheless he was dauntless! Jeremiah appeals to youth because of his fearlessness and loyalty to God. His prayer life was a great pattern for youth now. In like manner to the youth of Jeremiah's day, youth now have a true leader occasionally, in contrast to the many false leaders that are misguiding them. The true leaders of youth are in the minority today as they were in the times of Jeremiah. When earthly leaders fail, youth come to know that "Jesus never fails."

2. Marriage For Youth.

Marriage interests youth now more than any other subject. Nearly all young people look forward to the time when they can have their own homes and families. But little are they thankful at times for the peace in the world that makes marriage possible in their own nation. Marriage during the recent world war was accelerated in spite of adverse conditions. Youth married on short notice, and divorces were many. But on the other hand,

in some parts of Europe, marriage for refugee youth in their own homeland was impossible. For they were deported by the thousands as exiles or slave laborers. Thus, marriage in their homeland was out of the question for many of them. This situation corresponds exactly to the conditions in the times of Jeremiah. The young Jews of Judah were carried away to Babylon as captives to remain for seventy years. Naturally they could not marry their lovers in their native land. Jeremiah spoke of this condition in vivid imagery:

"Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride; for the land shall become a waste."¹

Similar statements are made elsewhere.² But were the conditions always adverse to joyous weddings in the country of Judah? No, for God in his love and mercy provided that the Jews could return in seventy years. Many of the refugee youth in Europe and Japan have returned to their own homes and enjoy the privilege of normal life again. God also provided for the return of youth in

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1. Ibid., 4:34.

2. Ibid., 16:9, 25:10.

the age that followed Jeremiah's:

"Yet again there shall be heard in this place...
the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, and
the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the
bride.."1

God is still merciful today as he was then. He has provided for the welfare of youth throughout the modern world.

3. Sin Afflicting Youth.

Sin curses every age! Since Adam to the present moment, sin has stalked the hearts of men and women everywhere! Sin produces juvenile delinquents today by the thousands as it has always done. It produced them in the days of Jeremiah. Today sin in youth is explained on a psychological basis by some of the modern psychologists, but the problem is not solved in this way. The horrors of sin are softened by false preachers and leaders of youth. The argument is brought forth that youth will grow out of the maladjustment. But these views are in sharp contrast to Jeremiah's idea of sin in the heart of man:

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt: who can know it? I, Jehovah, search the mind, I try the heart.."2

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1. Ibid., 33:10-11.
2. Ibid., 17:9-10.

This is the word of God and it is equally true now! Youth is still infected with sin in the heart. It is agreed that modern youth are as sinful as ever and that the peak age of crime is but seventeen, but what about the spiritual conditions of youth in the days of Jeremiah? Were youth better or worse than today? Jeremiah shows that they were just as bad:

"For the children...of Judah have done only that which was evil in my sight from their youth."¹

The sin of rebellion against God and the church is prominent among youth of the twentieth century. This same sin afflicted the youth of Jeremiah's day:

"...for we have sinned against Jehovah our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day; and we have not obeyed the voice of Jehovah our God."²

And again:

"This hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my voice."³

Thus, a comparison of youth now and youth then shows that sin is a timeless disease for youth. It infected the lives of the youth of Jeremiah's day. And it does the same now! It needs a solution now as it did then.

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1. Ibid., 32:30.
2. Ibid., 3:25b.
3. Ibid., 22:21.

The solution for sin today is a living faith in Christ and his atoning work on the cross. The solution then was a living faith in God and a lively hope of the Messiah who was to come.¹

4. War Punishing Youth.

a. By Starvation.

Thousands and even millions of young people died in the world wars in this generation by the lack of food. And they are still dying! The price of war is still being paid by the innocent and the guilty alike! Great efforts are now being made to rush food and clothing to Europe. Conditions of hunger existed in Jeremiah's day twenty five hundred years ago which remind one of the present. Starvation stalked the earth then as it does now at the present minute. In speaking of the priests at Anathoth who had attempted to kill Jeremiah, God said:

"Behold, I will punish them: the young men shall die by the sword; their sons and their daughters shall die by the famine."²

Another reference is made to young men and women who

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1. Ibid., 23:5-6; 31:31-34; 33:15-16.
2. Ibid., 11:22.

starved to death in war¹ during the siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans. Jeremiah was commanded not to marry because of the fact that starvation² and death would come to his family, should he have one, as well as to other families in the approaching blitz of doom. The other references to starvation are alarming.³ There is an amazing parallel between these conditions and the ones now! Youth may readily learn from this that sin brings punishment to thwart civilization. Youth may also learn that sin does not pay, but that it surely exacts its "pound of flesh" through pain, sorrow, and death.

b. By Death in Battle.

Thousands of young men have died in battle in modern wars. Some of the best talent that ever lived perished. Youth are alarmed about such conditions. It is a real problem to them. But do they realize that it has always been a problem? Do they know that it was a problem for youth in the days of Jeremiah? Young men died in battle in that time as they do in the twentieth century.⁴

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1. Ibid., 14:16.

2. Ibid., 16:4.

3. Ibid., 14:12, 15:2, and 18:21.

4. Ibid., 6:11, 9:21, 11:21-22, and 18:21.

Many of the young men of Judah perished in the battle to save Jerusalem in 586 B. C. Jeremiah told the Jews to surrender to Babylon, but they would not obey. Youth of foreign nations also died in battle in the time of Jeremiah.¹ Death in battle was universal for youth of Jeremiah's day as it is today! Modern youth can learn from this comparison that war does not pay. It has never settled the problems of the world and it never will! Above all youth should realize that wars will always rage as long as the heart of man is sinful because of the rejection of Christ, the Prince of Peace! War will always be a problem for the youth of the coming generations, but there is a solution for it in the gospel of the Prince of Peace.

C. The National Problems in Judah

1. Religious.

a. Sinning Against God.

Jeremiah's age corresponds to ours because of the basic problem of sin among youth and others. The whole book of Jeremiah is directed against the sins of the people

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1. Ibid., 48:15, 49:26, 50:30, 51:3, and 51:20-21.

of that age. Jeremiah mentioned specific sins: breaking the Sabbath,¹ worshipping idols,² slavery,³ forsaking God,⁴ burning sons and daughters to Molech,⁵ and disobeying God in other ways.⁶ The parallel to the present is apparent! It need not even be mentioned that the world is deep in sin today. Youth all over the world are sinning against God and each other as they did in the days of Jeremiah. The religious problem of Judah was sin. The same problem infests the whole world today. The sins of today are phrased in different words, but basically they are the same as those in the age of Jeremiah.

b. Worshipping Idols.

A few of the many references to dreadful idol worship show the extent of it.⁷ It was a national sin committed with deliberation and sanctioned by the false preachers of the day! They cooperated with it in every way to make it a "success." The Jews of Jeremiah's time turned their backs on God and worshipped idols of wood,

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1. Ibid., 17:10-27.
2. Ibid., 1:16.
3. Ibid., 34:8-22.
4. Ibid., 1:16, 32:33.
5. Ibid., 32:35.
6. Ibid., 44:23.
7. Ibid., 1:16, 2:26-28; 7:8-11, 17-19; 9:13-15; 44:15-23.

gold, and silver. Modern youth say: "How horrible!" But yet they are guilty of idol worship. People around the world are guilty of it. The deceiving idols of this age are pleasure, money, fame, popularity, and liquor. The form of the idol has changed somewhat, but the same affection and sin remains! Misdirected worship is a problem in the world now as it was in the days of Jeremiah. This despicable condition always follows when people refuse to love and obey God. Youth now are no exception. The solution to this problem of youth is a return to Jesus Christ for cleansing from the love for the false gods of this pagan age.

2. Social.

a. Slavery.

The condition of slavery in Judah resembled the slavery in America during the period before the civil war. More recently the world has been aware of the slavery in Germany of forced labor. Slavery is basically evil wherever it is carried on. It is the use of personality to achieve unworthy ends, rather than making personality and its value an end in itself. What is youth's attitude toward the slavery of the twentieth century that is being

practiced in some parts of the world? Would youth be willing to re-introduce slavery into America if this were possible?

Jeremiah had to deal with the problem of slavery.¹ During his day servants were permitted by the law of Moses with the understanding that no servant would have to serve more than six years.² But during this six years, each servant was to be treated as a brother, not as a slave.³ With this in mind, the question of slavery in the times of Jeremiah comes forward. Zedekiah and the people made an agreement in the temple to let their servants go free because Babylon was again warring against Jerusalem. But when Babylon withdrew temporarily, the king and the people forced the servants to return, thus making slaves out of them. They had been released for a stronger defence of the city, not because they were supposed to be released by law since most of them had probably served longer than six years.⁴ The release was excellent for the servants as long as it lasted, even though based on the wrong motive. Because Zedekiah and the people had subjected their servants as

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1. Ibid., 34:8-22.
2. Exodus 21:2 and Deuteronomy 15:12.
3. Leviticus 25:43.
4. Jeremiah 34:14.

slaves, Jeremiah denounced them in strong irony:

"...Ye have not hearkened unto me, to proclaim liberty, every man to his brother...behold, I proclaim unto you a liberty, saith Jehovah, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine.."¹

There is just as much evil in slavery in modern life as there was in it during the time of Jeremiah when he denounced it without restraint. This passage in Jeremiah will do much to form the right attitude in youth toward this great evil which is prevalent in some parts of the world even now. It has shown itself in one form or another all through history.

b. Sabbath Breaking.

Sabbath breaking is one of the greatest social evils in the modern world today. Youth are participating in it on a great scale. "Sabbath" for this study is the synonym of Sunday. Sunday is being broken in business, industry, in recreation, and in all parts of modern life. Sunday in many parts of the world is treated and regarded the same as any other day. Just as in the days of Jeremiah, the worship of God is far removed from the minds of thousands of people on the morning when they should be

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1. Ibid., 34:17.

in some place of worship. Youth are at fault as well as adults. Jeremiah had a similar problem in his day.

The people of his time were carrying on their work on the sabbath as is done today.¹ Jeremiah warned them against the sin of it, but they turned him a deaf ear. How typical of the reaction of people today! The young people must solve this problem for themselves by much consideration, but the stand taken by Jeremiah will do much to clarify their thinking on this problem. They will come to see for themselves the basic sin involved in the desecration of the day of worship. The extent of this sin today is vast. Youth must become leaders to put an end to this menace to society!

3. Economic.

a. Failure of Crops.

The failure of crops in parts of America, especially in the Middle West, and in India, China, and other parts of the world constitutes a real economic problem for modern people. It has lowered the standards of living and has caused malnutrition. It has also taken the

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1. Ibid., 17:19-27.

lives of thousands. The times of Jeremiah were afflicted with the failure of crops also.¹ It was for the people of his time a real economic problem as it is now. For Jeremiah it was a spiritual problem as well. He attributed the drought to the sins of the people. He then confessed their sins and his own and prayed for rain.² Some young people now do not believe in praying for rain, but this does not change the fact that God answers this type of prayer today just as he did for Jeremiah and Elijah. The economic problems of Jeremiah's day were based on something deeper--the spiritual problem. Youth now can learn from this that the spiritual problem is basic in all of life, and when this is settled, the economic problems, as well as the other problems, will eventually straighten out because of a transformed society. And in regard to drought, youth may be assured that God will answer the prayers of sincere people who pray for rain in faith.

b. Poverty in Exile.

The exiles of the twentieth century know real poverty! They have been forced to leave all of their possessions behind; their only earthly possessions have

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1. Ibid., 14:1-16, 22.

2. Ibid., 14:19-22.

been in many instances the shattered clothing which they wore, a few coins, and a small amount of items that they could conveniently carry on foot. The poverty of the Jews who forced out of Germany, were compelled to flee, has been appalling! Some of them were millionaires while in Germany, but they left as paupers. The Jews of Jeremiah's time were also exiles.¹ They were deported to Babylon to remain for seventy years. The long siege against Jerusalem had caused many Jews to die of starvation and disease. But the one who lived to become exiles were hungry and lacked money and health. Many of them owned property, but this was left behind.² Only a few possessions were taken into Babylon. The economic situation then and now are closely allied with the spiritual problem. When nations and individuals sin against God, they are punished in an economic way, in many cases, to bring them back to a living faith in God. Youth are being punished throughout the world economically for the sins that they have committed against God. The economic problems of the world of Jeremiah are basically the same as the economic problems of today. The solution for them

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1. Ibid., 52:28-30.

2. Ibid., chapter 32.

is found in the type of leadership which is filled with the ideals and inspiration of Jesus.

4. Political.

a. Evil Rulers.

Today one need not look far to find evil rulers in the world. Two of the worst, Hitler and Mussolini, have lived and died in this generation, but many others similar to them are left to curse the world. Youth of the present are following evil rulers as they did in Jeremiah's time. It is the responsibility of the youth leaders to warn young people against the false rulers of the present. Jeremiah did exactly this!¹ He was always alert to point out the sins of the kings of his day and to urge them to obey God.² Josiah was the only good king during the time of Jeremiah. The evil kings were: Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Jehoahaz, and Zedekiah. Young people in the times of Jeremiah were compelled to make a decision for or against the kings. They either pledged their loyalty to them or to true leaders. Modern young people all over the world face a similar problem in regard to the world leaders now.

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1.Ibid., 21:11-23:8.

2.Ibid., 38:20-23.

b. Corrupt Government.

Evil kings naturally and inevitably produce a corrupt form of government. As it was in the days of Jeremiah so it is now in modern times. Corrupt government in the world is on the march! Totalitarianism is crushing the individual, whereas it should exalt him. Dictators are using human personalities as means to an end, rather than treating them as ends in themselves. The evils of the government of Judah were failure to produce justice, infestation with selfishness, oppression of the widow and the orphan, and the murdering of innocent people for selfish aims.¹ These were the sins of the monarchial form of government of that time. But the chief sin was that it failed and refused to take the advice of God given through Jeremiah. Today the governments of the world are not obeying the voice of God which is coming through the Jeremiahs of the twentieth century. Their ears are deaf to the voice of God and to the spiritual appeal. They are obeying the leaders of materialism, rather than the leaders of the invisible realities. Youth

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1. Ibid., 22:3.

are faced with the problem of corrupt government throughout the world of today. Will youth arise to the challenge and produce Christian leaders in government? This is the challenge that is before the modern youth! Only through Christian leaders can the problems of corrupt government of the twentieth century be corrected.

D. The International Problems of the
World of Jeremiah

1. The Problem of War.

The world has witnessed two global conflicts in a generation. The last was the deadliest and the most devastating in all history. Youth around the world have been leaders in the recent war again and even in a greater degree than before. Young men in the late teens and the early twenties piloted the smooth bombers through the skies and guided the great ships through the seas. Young men fought and died on the battlefields of the world. This generation has witnessed the fall of Rome, Berlin, and Tokyo. Power fought against power, machine against machine, man against man! And in the midst of such a chaotic condition, there were those who cried, without mature judgment, "Peace! Peace!" when there was

no peace. Little do such people realize that war is as old as civilization, and will always remain as long as there is the sinful heart of man. Wars raged in the times of Jeremiah and they rage in this age. Youth must face the agelessness of war and form their attitudes on the basis of this. Youth should be shown that the basic problem of war is the human heart. The only cure for war is the person of Jesus and his peace which he alone can give to the world.

Great kingdoms arose to power and fell in Jeremiah's day! Great capitals fell as did Berlin, Rome, and Tokyo. Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, fell in 612 B. C. to the power of Babylon. Jerusalem fell in 686 B. C. to the Babylonians. Babylon fell in 538 B. C. to the Medes and the Persians. Great battles were fought in Jeremiah's day as in our own. The battle of Carchemish was fought near the Euphrates river in 608 B. C.¹ Assyria defeated Egypt in this battle. King Josiah of Judah went out to fight against Egypt, while she was on her way to fight Assyria, and he was defeated and slain by Pharaoh at the battle of Megiddo.

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1. II Kings 23:29-30; Jeremiah 46:2.

Judah was invaded in 625 B. C. by the Scythians.¹
Judah was plundered and many of the cities were destroyed.
Again Judah was invaded by Nebuchadrezzar in 597 B. C. and
at this time ten thousand Jews were carried to Babylon.²
Again he came in 588 B. C. and, after fighting against
Jerusalem for eighteen months, Jerusalem fell in 586 B. C.
At this time four thousand six hundred Jews were taken to
Babylon.³

The parallel between the conditions described
and the conditions of war in the twentieth century is
apparent. In that time war took its toll as it does to-
day. Young men fought and died as they do today. The
cause of war, the sin of the human heart, was the same
then as it is now. The cure for war, which is freedom
from sin through Christ, is the same today as it has
always been.

2. The Problem of Peace.

Peace for the world is the heart cry of the
nations of the world today! The United Nations are work-
ing for it. The newspapers, magazines, and movies are
promoting it in some form. Everyone is talking about it.

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1. Jeremiah 4-6.
2. II Kings 24:10-17.
3. Jeremiah 52.

Great world leaders are telling the people that peace can come through the efforts of men apart from the help of God and the "balance of power" of the few mighty.

In like manner, Jeremiah's age was faced with the problem of world peace and it was a real one! After the first group of captives had gone to Babylon, Jeremiah wrote them a letter which did much to point to peace in that age.¹ He told them to settle down in Babylon and to seek peace.² For, he said, the Jews would have to remain there for seventy long years. Jeremiah told them to plan for permanent peace:

"And seek the peace of the city whither I have cause you to be carried away captive, and pray unto Jehovah for it; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace."³

Yes, Jeremiah was helping to build the peace of the world. Many Christian leaders throughout the world are doing all within their power to promote peace. But Jeremiah was not over-optimistic about peace. He faced the problem squarely, knowing that basically the peace of the world was a spiritual problem. He rebuked the false priests and prophets of

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1. Jeremiah 29.
2. Ibid., 29:7.
3. Ibid.

his time for their false optimism concerning the hopes for the peace of the world:

"They have healed also the hurt of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace."¹

Jeremiah wanted world peace and his life was devoted to it. But he was wise enough to see that it could not come unless the sin problem were first solved. Youth now must face the problem of peace for themselves. They must do their part to build the peace of the world. But they must learn from Jeremiah not to be too optimistic because of the sinful nature of man which must be changed. This condition of man has always been a hindrance to world peace and it always will be unless it is transformed by the only power in the world that is effective--the love of God.

E. Summary

The past and the present have been brought together in this chapter to show the use of the parallel situations for young people of the modern age. A comparison has been made to discover the spiritual truths that will aid in solving the problems of youth in this time. The main concern of this chapter, in the events both

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1. Ibid., 6:14, 8:11.

past and present, has been to find a solution for the spiritual problems of youth of this age. Youth problems in the times of Jeremiah and our time were discussed. These common problems were found to be the right type of leadership, as well as the problems of marriage, sin, and war. The national problems of Judah were compared to the national problems of the nations of today. An analogy between the international problems of then and now showed that war and peace were common problems to both ages. All of the problems in this comparison, whether great or small, were shown to have a spiritual basis and solution. Christ was offered as a solution and the only one for the present problems of youth and of the world.

CHAPTER V

THE USE OF THE METHODS
EMPLOYED BY JEREMIAH

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A. Introduction

It is the purpose of this chapter to show how youth leaders of today may use some of the methods that Jeremiah mastered so effectively. He handled these methods efficiently in his earnest effort to reach the youth of his day with the truth. Jeremiah in his long ministry of forty years was aware that he needed suitable methods for his important task. Youth leaders now may become more effective in their work with young people if they will look to Jeremiah and learn from his practical, time-tested methods. These techniques, for the most part, are pedagogically sound, and the basic principles underlying them are up-to-date. Many of these same methods were used by Jesus, and are employed now by modern educators.

This chapter will discuss the use of the following methods: (1) imagery, (2) questions, (3) object lesson, and (4) drama. It is hoped that youth leaders will use some of these methods to enrich their ministry.

B. Imagery

Imagery is found on nearly every page in the book of Jeremiah! The reading is thus enhanced, and made vitally appealing. For this study "imagery" is synonymous with "figure of speech." A definition of imagery is:

"Images in general. Mental images taken collectively; broadly, the work of memory, imagination, or fancy. Figurative language, esp. when used as ornament."¹

Jeremiah used imagery to express his brilliant thoughts and to give variety to his messages. He used it effectively throughout his long ministry. Today almost everyone knows at least a small amount of the imagery of Jeremiah. For Jeremiah drew his imagery from agriculture, nature, commerce, and the everyday things of life. He reminds one of Jesus who also was effective in using imagery, and who can rightly be called the Master of imagery. Youth leaders now can learn much from the figures of speech in the book of Jeremiah. They need not use the exact phrases that he did, but at least they can be shown the need of using some type of imagery in their work influencing modern youth with the truth.

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1. Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Fifth Edition.

The importance of imagery in modern education is shown by a statement in Jesus the Master Teacher by Dr. H. H. Horne. On page 130, he quotes as follows:

"Dealing in likenesses, contrasts, and suggestions, figures flash word-pictures which vitalize all language, spoken or written from conversation to poetry.

"The most forceful figures are consequently those based on imagery: simile, metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy, personification, apostrophe, and irony."¹

Allusion, hyperbole, contrast, allegory, and paradox were used by Jeremiah in addition to the ones quoted above. There are at least twelve different types of imagery in Jeremiah. The metaphor and the simile are the most common types employed by Jeremiah in his appeal to people.

1. Metaphor.

The metaphor is the "use of a word...denoting one kind of object or idea in place of another by way of suggesting a likeness...between them."²

Jeremiah used a great many metaphors in an effective manner. One can easily count fifty or sixty of them in the book. A few of the outstanding ones are:

"For, behold, I have made thee this day a fortified city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls."³

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1. E. R. Musgrove, *Composition and Literature*, p. 142.
2. Webster, *op. cit.*
3. Jeremiah 1:18.

"...they¹ have forsaken me the fountain of living waters."¹

"I was a husband unto them."²

"Babylon hath been a golden cup in Jehovah's hand that made all the earth drunken."³

2. Simile.

A simile is "a figure of speech by which one thing, action, or relation is likened or explicitly compared, often with as or like, to something of different kind or quality."⁴

Jeremiah used the simile skillfully. The same skill should be sought by youth leaders now, so that more youth may be more effectively challenged! A few of the many similes in Jeremiah are as follows:

"As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed."⁵

"As a well casteth forth its waters, so she (Jerusalem) casteth forth her wickedness."⁶

"Lest my wrath go forth like fire,"⁷

"Behold, as the clay in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel."⁸

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1. Ibid., 2:13.
2. Ibid., 31:32.
3. Ibid., 51:7.
4. Webster, op. cit.
5. Jeremiah 2:26.
6. Ibid., 6:7.
7. Ibid., 4:4.
8. Ibid., 18:6b.

3. Metonymy.

"Use of one word for another that it suggests, as the effect for the cause, the cause for the effect, the sign for the thing signified, the container for the thing contained, etc. (a man keeps a good table, instead of good food)."¹

A few of the examples in Jeremiah are given:

"I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts."²

"Out of the land of Egypt, out of the iron furnace."³

"Can one break iron even iron from the north?"⁴

"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy words were unto me a joy and the rejoicing of my heart."⁵

4. Allusion.

This is indirect reference to something or somebody.

"Yet I planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed; how then art thou turned into the degenerate branches of a foreign vine unto me?"⁶

"In those days, and at that time, will I cause a branch of righteousness to grow up unto David."⁷

"How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken!"⁸

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1. Webster, op. cit.
2. Jeremiah 6:19.
3. Ibid., 11:4.
4. Ibid., 15:12.
5. Ibid., 15:16.
6. Ibid., 2:21.
7. Ibid., 33:15.
8. Ibid., 50:23.

5. Apostrophe.

This consists in addressing the absent as though they were present.

"...O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock.." ¹

"O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth.." ²

"O thou that dwellest upon many waters.." ³

6. Hyperbole.

This is rhetorical overstatement or exaggeration.

"Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" ⁴

"Their widows are increased to me above the sand of the seas.." ⁵

"Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed?.." ⁶

7. Synecdoche.

This figure of speech gives a part for a whole or a whole for a part.

"How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken!"

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1. Ibid., 49:16.
2. Ibid., 6:26.
3. Ibid., 51:13.
4. Ibid., 9:1.
5. Ibid., 15:8.
6. Ibid., 15:18a.
7. Ibid., 50:23.

"Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth!.."1

8. Contrast.

There is much contrast in the book of Jeremiah. He used it efficiently to point out the sins of the people. Sometimes Jeremiah would contrast the Jews with the surrounding peoples to show that in some things the Jews were even greater sinners than the heathen.

"Hath a nation changed its gods, which yet are no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit."2

"Yea, the stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times...but my people know not the law of Jehovah."3

"The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab...are performed...but I have spoken unto you...and ye have not hearkened unto me."4

9. Allegory.

"Allegory is prolonged metaphor, in which typically a series of actions are symbolic of other actions."5

The good and the bad figs is perhaps the only example of allegory in the book.6

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1. Ibid., 15:10.
2. Ibid., 2:11.
3. Ibid., 8:7.
4. Ibid., 35:14.
5. Webster, op. cit.
6. Jeremiah 24.

10. Irony.

"A sort of humor, ridicule, or light sarcasm, the intended implication of which is the opposite of the literal sense of the words.."1

"...Ye have not hearkened unto me, to proclaim liberty, every man to his brother, and every man to his neighbor: behold, I proclaim unto you a liberty, saith Jehovah, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine.."2

"But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble:.."3

11. Paradox.

"..an assertion or sentiment seemingly contradictory, or opposed to common sense, but that yet may be true in fact.."4

"Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; that have eyes, and see not; that have ears, and hear not.."5

"..I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hand of her enemies.."6

12. Personification.

Representation of an inanimate object as
endowed with personal attributes.

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1. Webster, op. cit.
2. Jeremiah 34:17.
3. Ibid., 2:28.
4. Webster, op. cit.
5. Jeremiah 5:21.
6. Ibid., 12:7.

"Who say to a stock, Thou art my father: and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth."¹

"But where are thy gods, that thou hast made thee? let them arise."²

C. Questions

Jeremiah asked the people many piercing questions. He even asked God pointed questions and expected an answer to each of them. Jeremiah never answered the questions that he asked the people, but he let them do it for themselves. This is sound teaching method. Today as we read Jeremiah, we must stop and answer the questions that are so skillfully proposed. In his questions, Jeremiah appealed to the (1) intellect, (2) the will, and (3) the emotions.

1. Appeal To the Intellect.

By intellectual questions, Jeremiah caused his listeners to think. These questions were on an intellectual level and they provoked serious thought then as they do now. In many respects these questions set a pattern for dealing with youth in personal guidance. Here are some of the typical questions used by

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1. Ibid., 2:27.

2. Ibid., 2:28.

Jeremiah to appeal to the minds of his listeners:

"What unrighteousness have your fathers found in me, that they have gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?"¹

"Can one break iron, even iron from the north?.." ²

"Shall the snow of Lebanon fall from the rock of the field? or shall the cold waters that flow down from afar be dried up?"³

"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?"⁴

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt: who can know it?"⁵

But there is not the appeal to the intellect alone, for Jeremiah also appealed to the will for action and the emotions were appealed to for reaction.

2. Appeal To The Will.

In appealing to the will of youth, there is the appeal for action. Youth need to act in order to earn a living, get an education, and also to come into a right relationship with God. The latter is our primary concern. Jeremiah knew how to appeal to the wills of his listeners, and youth leaders now need to learn how to do

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1. Ibid., 2:5.
2. Ibid., 15:12.
3. Ibid., 18:14.
4. Ibid., 13:23.
5. Ibid., 17:9.

the same. G. Campbell Morgan says that the appeal to the will in preaching is even more important than the appeals to the intellect and the emotions. For truth needs to be acted upon. Truth demands action! In like manner, the appeal to the will in dealing with modern youth in spiritual problems is vitally important. Here are some of the outstanding questions used by Jeremiah to appeal to the will:

"Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate branches of a foreign vine unto me?"¹

"O house₂ of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter?"

"...Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words? saith Jehovah?"³

"O Jerusalem wash thy heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved."⁴

"Shall I not visit for these things? saith Jehovah; shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"⁵

3. Appeal to the Emotions.

Young people are naturally emotional. Wise

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1. Ibid., 2:21.
2. Ibid., 18:6.
3. Ibid., 35:13.
4. Ibid., 4:14.
5. Ibid., 5:29.

leadership will necessarily refrain from overworking the emotions of youth. But there is a place for the appeal to the religious emotions of youth. The religious emotion is different from the ordinary human emotion, and it is with this that we are concerned. Jeremiah certainly appealed to the emotions of his listeners through the use of skillful questions, and in other ways as well. He could not escape the appeal to the emotions because his message was so urgent. What a challenge for the leaders of youth now! The message for youth that will really challenge them will have a proper amount of emotion in it, if it is flowing from the heart of the leader. Here are a few of the many questions of Jeremiah that appeal to the emotions:

"Can a virgin forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number."¹

"Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"²

"How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of the whole country wither?..³"

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1. Ibid., 2:32.
2. Ibid., 8:22.
3. Ibid., 12:4.

D. Object Lessons

Jeremiah did not intend that we should brand some of his acts as object lessons, but some of them were just that. Youth leaders now may use his object lessons orally to illustrate a talk, or they may reproduce them actually to make it more vivid. In using the object lessons, care needs to be taken that they do not appear to be childish. If they are youth will not respond favorably to them. Object lessons need to be put on a level especially for youth. Jesus put an object lesson at a high enough level to appeal to Nicodemus, a highly-educated man. He also taught his disciples humility through the object lesson of washing feet which was on a much lower intellectual level. Four of the object lessons of Jeremiah will be studied.

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1. Potter's Wheel.

Much work would be found in trying to make a potter's wheel similar to the one that Jeremiah saw in the potter's house when he went there at the command of God, but a group of young people could do it. Or perhaps a potter's house could be located so that a

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1. Ibid., 18:1-12.

group of them could go and visit it, as did Jeremiah. Another plan for the use of this object lesson, which is so rich in its meaning, is to have it as the main illustration for a talk designed especially for youth. This would appeal to young people if one would emphasize the workmanship of the Divine Potter in molding and shaping each individual life to serve him more effectively. If through the fault of the human clay, the first plan fails, God has another plan and he will again mold the clay in his skillful hands. Some use this passage to emphasize the sin in man that makes it necessary for the Divine Potter to remake the clay. This incident is a great favorite for youth workers today as it has always been.

2. Wine Before The Rechabites.¹

So often this passage has been used for a temperance lesson, but temperance is not the main thought of this object lesson. Rather the purpose of God in sending Jeremiah to offer the Rechabites wine was to illustrate their obedience to their earthly fathers as contrasted to Israel's disobedience to their heavenly Father.

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1. Jeremiah 35.

The Rechabites obeyed their fathers in a comparatively minor command--not to drink wine, but the people of Israel disobeyed God in the greatest command--to repent of sin and to return to God. This object lesson could become a project for a group of youth. This incident could be re-enacted. The aim of the object lesson would be to challenge youth to obey Christ in all his commands.

3. The Good and the Bad Figs.¹

Jeremiah either saw the good and the bad figs in a vision or perhaps he saw sculptored figs on the front of the temple in Jerusalem. How he saw them we do not know, but the result has been a wonderful object lesson for modern youth. In this incident, as in the Rechabite object lesson, the main idea is obedience. The good figs are the people who are obeying God and surrendering to Babylon, for this was God's command. The bad figs are the people, including King Zedekiah, who are disobeying God and are resisting Babylon. In like manner, the youth who obey God's commands are the

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1. Ibid., 24.

good figs, and the disobedient youth are the bad figs. The leader of youth could buy some figs, both good and spoiled, and could use them in illustrating a talk on this incident. Perhaps this whole passage could be used as the scripture lesson for a program on obedience. The value of this object lesson lies in its simplicity and vividness. It is sure to make an appeal to youth. For the good figs, there is the promise of peace and happiness, and for the bad figs, there is the promise of destruction.

4. The Point of a Diamond.¹

"The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the tablet of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars."

One could make a pen of iron, and put an inexpensive jewel on the end of the point to represent a diamond. The tablet could be a magic slate or a wax slate. The pen and the tablet could be used in a talk designed for youth. During the course of the address, the word "sin" could be written on a space on the slate in the shape of a heart. This would be effective in

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1. Ibid., 17:1.

in showing to youth the permanency of sin in the heart until it is removed by Christ. To demonstrate the removal of sin, the word "sin" could in some clever way be removed from the slate in the presence of the youth. If this object lesson were used effectively by a Christ-like leader, it could be the means of leading youth to decisions for Christ. The power would not be in the method but rather in the Spirit of God working through this object lesson which we inherit from Jeremiah.

In all of the object lessons that have been given, it must be remembered that they are not able to do everything. They can be easily overworked and lose their power of attraction. The wise leader of youth will use them with discretion and with the best of mature judgment. In all cases the object lesson must be adjusted to appeal to the particular group of youth that is being served. Object lessons must be designed especially for youth of the present with their modern desires and likes. The appeal should not be on a childish level nor should it be on too high a level. The judgment of the youth leader is vitally important in adjusting the appeal to the heart and mind of youth.

E. Drama

There are dramatic incidents in Jeremiah that could be effectively used as drama for young people's benefit. Jeremiah did not intend that these incidents should be dramatic, but they certainly were. The drama in Jeremiah is moving and arousing! In fact the whole book is a daring drama in itself. It appeals to the adventurous youth of the twentieth century. Perhaps the most interesting and challenging approach to the book for youth is the dramatic one. Youth will become interested in the book through the use of drama if in no other way an appeal can be made. There is a challenging appeal to youth when the book can be acted out by them in their own original way. A book has been written putting the book of Jeremiah in dramatic form.¹ Perhaps this book could be followed or better still, youth could work out the dramatic scenes by themselves, choose their costumes, and portray the characters. This approach is certain to appeal to modern youth. It literally makes the book live and gets the message of the book across in an uncomparable fashion. Youth will enjoy the book of Jeremiah from the dramatic approach.

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1. Stefan Zweig, A Drama in Nine Scenes.

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1. The Broken Bottle.

This is one of the most dramatic scenes in the entire book. It has suspense, emotion, and action. It is vitally interesting. It has a great climax at the time of the breaking of the bottle by Jeremiah. One of the young people could represent Jeremiah and carry a large bottle or vinegar jug. He could appear before his congregation who would also be dressed in proper costumes. The location would be a valley to correspond to the valley of Hinnom. The youth representing Jeremiah could have the main ideas of the sermon memorized so that he could give them without faltering or hesitating. The congregation would show its skepticism by the expressions on the faces. Then at the climax of the sermon, the bottle would be broken on the floor and the youth representing Jeremiah would exclaim: "God will do the same to you if you do not repent of your sins and return to God!" This dramatic scene would appeal to youth in a real way. It would cause them to see the wrath of God as well as his love in inviting people everywhere to repent of sin. The aim of this drama is to lead youth to repent of sin.

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1. Jeremiah 19.

Perhaps at the end of the drama, the youth leader could extend an invitation to those youth who wished to repent of their sins and accept Christ as their personal Friend.

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2. The Sermon on Shiloh.

Perhaps this is the greatest dramatic scene in the entire book for it shows the fearlessness of Jeremiah in the clearest manner. The scene could be re-enacted by a group of young people in such a way as to demonstrate the bravery that comes to any one who will surrender his life completely to God as did Jeremiah throughout his life. One young person could act the part of Jeremiah. Other youth could portray the parts of the people, the priests, the prophets, the princes, the elders who saved Jeremiah's life, and also Jeremiah's good friend Ahikam, who also helped to save his life on this occasion. The value of re-enacting this dramatic scene lies in the fact that fearlessness, as Jeremiah possessed, is so clearly demonstrated. This is sure to challenge youth to be fearless in their testimony for Christ in the public school, at the place of business, and in the home.

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1. Ibid., 26.

If this drama from the life of Jeremiah could really do this, which by God's grace it can do, one of the greatest problems of youth could be solved. For they are tempted to keep quiet about the great things that God has done for them. Youth have great fear of witnessing for Christ. Jeremiah's great example of courage will challenge them greatly.

3. Buying a Field.¹

This dramatic scene demonstrated Jeremiah's simple faith in God. When Jeremiah was in prison, God commanded him to buy a field at Anathoth for cash from Hanamel, his cousin, who was to come to him in the prison. Hanamel came and asked Jeremiah to purchase the field. Jeremiah bought the field against his better judgment and paid the money to his cousin. For he acted in simple faith at God's command. This is a great example of Jeremiah's simple faith in God. One young person could portray the part of the prisoner Jeremiah, another could be Hanamel, and still others, Jeremiah's partners in the prison. Then as a climax, the youth representing Jeremiah could repeat from memory the prayer recorded that Jeremiah

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1. Ibid., 32.

offered to God because of his perplexity. Another could read the verse in which God answered Jeremiah's problem.¹ Such a drama could do much to strengthen the active faith of youth in God. It could teach them to act in faith on God's commands, even when they seem unreasonable.

4. Jeremiah and the King.²

This was the fourth inquiry of the king during the war between Babylon and Palestine. The other three were important, but this one was the most important and the most dramatic of all since it was the final one. For at the final hour the air was full of tenseness as the military situation was becoming more severe for the Jews. The king was pondering whether or not to surrender to Babylon or to hold out for more time to fight the enemy. In his perplexity, the king said to Jeremiah:

"I will ask thee a thing; hide nothing from me."³

Then Jeremiah asked the king if he would be put to death for telling him the truth. The king fervently promised his protection. Then in his great boldness, Jeremiah told the wicked king for the fourth time to surrender to

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1. Ibid., 32:43-44.

2. Ibid., 38:14-28.

3. Ibid., 38:14.

Babylon or die a horrible death. The king refused to obey God, had his eyes put out by the enemy, and was carried away as a captive with the rest of the Jews. In this dramatic scene the courage of Jeremiah in a national situation is clearly shown. Young people could effectively portray the various characters of this moving drama.

F. Summary

Some of the methods used by Jeremiah have been shown, and their relevance for use with modern youth has been pointed out for their leaders. Means have been suggested to use these methods today with modern youth. In their basic principles, these methods are modern and up-to-date. They have their appeal today as they have always had since Jeremiah devised them. Jeremiah's imagery was also pointed out. There were many types of it all of which are vitally appealing to youth.

Another method used by Jeremiah was piercing questions by which he appealed to the intellect, the will, and the emotions. Jeremiah commonly used object lessons. They made his message vivid, and can do the same for youth sermons now. The drama in the book is stirring and can

be used effectively with modern young people. The suggestion was made that the dramatic approach was perhaps the most appealing approach to the book.

All of the methods used by Jeremiah, especially the four pointed out, have a real contribution to make to the skill of the leader of modern youth. The basic principles underlying these methods are valuable for every age.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to demonstrate the various means by which Jeremiah can be used to meet the spiritual needs of modern youth. Spiritual needs refer to those needs of the soul which can only be supplied by God's grace given through Jesus Christ.

The use of the biography of Jeremiah with youth was shown to be valuable. For in the person of Jeremiah, who so closely resembled Christ, we have a personality to whom modern youth can confidently look for leadership for various perplexing problems. Such an assertion is made because Jeremiah was called by God his world-wide task. In his youth he was also prepared by God to go out as a world leader for truth. Furthermore, Jeremiah's active ministry showed his qualifications for a leader. He was loyal to God, fearless in crises, firm in his human relations, and systematic in his life of prayer. His loyalty to God was clearly shown by his uncompromising message and his uncompromising everyday living. He had one message and one standard of living. His fearlessness in crises was demonstrated by the great personal crises as well as the national crises. It was pointed out that this fearlessness, which is so greatly

needed by modern youth, possessed the life of Jeremiah because he was completely surrendered to the will of God for his life. In his human relations Jeremiah was firm. He stood for his convictions and for the truth of God at the risk of his life. He is characterized best by his constant and systematic prayer life. He prayed for a multitude of things both small and great. He prayed in the easy of life as well as in the difficult ones. His prayer life is a great pattern for modern youth to challenge them to greater service for Christ and church.

In Chapter three the use of the devotional passages was brought to light. A substantial part of the book has value for both public and private devotional purposes. For private devotions great passages on faith, love, hope, witnessing, and courage were brought to the front. These were presented with the aim of meeting the spiritual needs of modern youth in their devotional lives. For public devotions challenging passages were pointed out for group meetings of young people and for worship services in the Sunday School. In like manner, these passages for public devotions were presented to meet the devotional needs of modern youth. Jeremiah is a valuable devotional book with depths that cannot be

completely fathomed, but yet the common reader can benefit from the truths that are open to everyone.

In the use of the situations that parallel the present, the times of Jeremiah and the modern age were compared. The aim was to show how modern youth may be spiritually benefited from this striking parallel. The youth problems in the times of Jeremiah, which were leadership, marriage, sin, and war, were basically the same as the problems of modern youth. These problems were perplexing in the times of Jeremiah as they are in the twentieth century. Christ was offered throughout this study as the solution for all of these contemporary problems of youth. The national problems of Judah, which were religious, social, economic, and political, were found to resemble clearly the national problems of various nations today. The relation between youth and these problems was discussed and the solution was offered. The international problems of war and peace in the age of Jeremiah were the same as today. Wars raged then as they do now. People hoped in vain for peace then as they are doing today. For the youth problems, the national problems, and the international problems of the present, youth can learn much from Jeremiah.

Finally, the methods of Jeremiah were discussed. Their relevance for use with modern youth was clearly demonstrated. This chapter on the methods of Jeremiah was especially designed for the leaders of modern youth. It tells how to reach the youth with the truth of the book. These methods, which youth leaders can effectively use today, are imagery, questions that appeal to the intellect, the will, and the emotions, object lessons, and drama. Through the use of these techniques devised by Jeremiah, the truth can reach the youth and help to meet their tremendous spiritual problems.

We can assert, therefore, that the book of Jeremiah does meet the spiritual needs of modern youth. The various uses of the book can supply the spiritual nourishment which is needed so greatly in the twentieth century. Jeremiah is a treasure house of golden spiritual truths for which modern youth are so urgently calling.

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