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SALVATION SOLDIERY

CHAPTER 7: JEREMIAH PUTTING DOWN THE SALVATIONIST

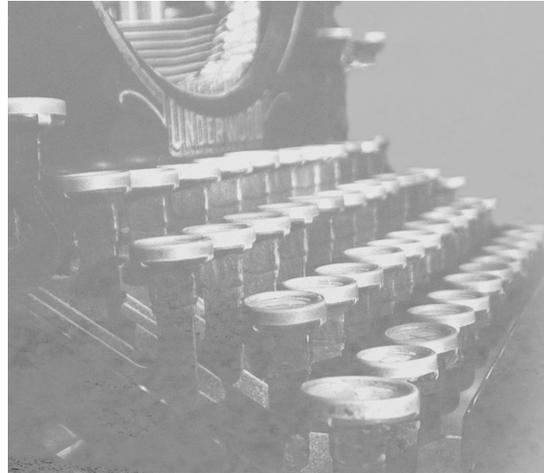
"Then took they Jeremiah. and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah, the son of Hammelech, that was in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire." – JER. 38:6

NOW, then, seize the bold prophet, with his words of ill omen. We hate the message of destruction--seize him, the king consents; at least, he does not dissent. Seize him, bind him--tighter: never mind his flesh. Now then, swing him over the pit. Steady there: hold hard; now let go, -- lower--lower. Let him try his doleful alarms on the crawling things down there; lower, still lower; until his eyes say farewell to the light, and his feet touch and sink in the mire. There, let go now, for good; pull up your ropes, shut down the doors, and leave the old man to both meditation and starvation. He would not hold his peace: he will be quiet enough now, and we shall be done with him--done with him forever!

Now, whatever was all this about? It was just here. The City of Jerusalem had become such a Sodom of iniquity that God had doomed it to destruction; but willing to save whoever in it would obey Him by leaving it, He sent Jeremiah with a message to this effect. A large number of the leading men of the city neither believed God nor were willing to leave Jerusalem; and because Jeremiah would not cease persuading the people, they tried to shut his mouth by shutting him up in this dungeon.

Alas that a similar necessity for such messages still exists!

But do not all the ungodly live in a doomed Jerusalem? Has not God sentenced to destruction every city of ease and sinful indulgence, and worldly pomp, and fashion, and devilish iniquity in which the millions around us live? Has He not declared that there is no peace, and never shall be; but rather wasting, and mildew, and wrath, and perdition forever, to those who abide there? This is an awful condition of things, but, thank God, with it there comes direct from the mouth of the same Jehovah the



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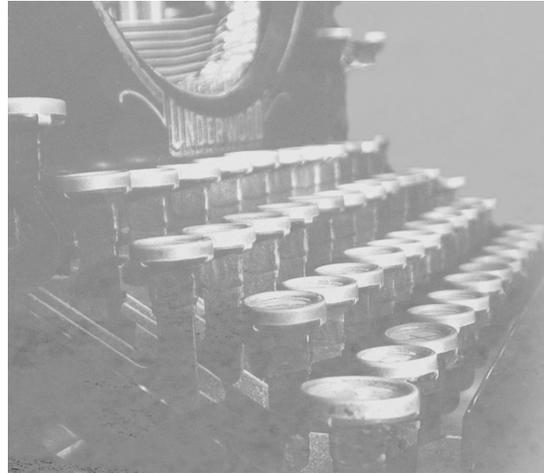
message that if men will rise, and depart, and flee out of their Sodom of iniquity, they shall have salvation.

And, thank God, with this message we have prophets-- Salvation Soldiers-- Jeremiahs --who will deliver it. Few and feeble they may be, in comparison with this grand old man, but we rejoice to know they are growing in boldness, and power, and number every day. Oh, Lord, multiply them on every hand.

Are we to be surprised that the prophets of our time, and of all time, should meet with similar treatment to that which was accorded to Jeremiah? Will not the men and women who hate God now act out their hatred in a similar manner to that in which these God-rejectors acted it out then? Of course they will, and the response will be the same, and Jeremiah, in the year 1881, must, if possible, be silenced. Tie him up with ropes; put him in some dungeon; punish him with ridicule, with misrepresentation, with hootings, and howlings, and blasphemies, and oaths, and mud, and rotten eggs, and brick-bats, and blows, and as much worse as the laws and sympathies, and pity, and civilization of this Christian land will allow.

Now, this system of imprisoning and dungeoning of God Almighty's Jeremiahs seems to us open to serious objections. That it does so, from the standpoint of The War Cry, will not for a moment be called in question, but we think it is open to objection from the standpoint of the adversaries of Jeremiah themselves, and, indeed, from every other standpoint. Let us see:

1. THIS SYSTEM OF PUNISHING AND PITCHING INTO THE PROPHETS IS OBJECTIONABLE, BECAUSE IT MUST BE A VERY UNPLEASANT OPERATION TO THE PRINCIPAL ACTORS, AND TO ALL WHO TAKE PART IN IT. -- To fasten with ropes and let down into a pit, and shut up in a dark dungeon, this helpless, unresisting old man, must have made these fellows--these gentlemen, noblemen, we suppose they reckoned themselves--feel uncommonly mean. To fight with non-combatants, to shoot down, or otherwise knock about and punish those, women and children included, who don't or won't defend themselves, is usually reckoned the reverse of chivalrous, or noble, or manly. Especially would this be the case where those who were punished were seeking the benefit of those who ill-used them. This sort of thing cannot be very



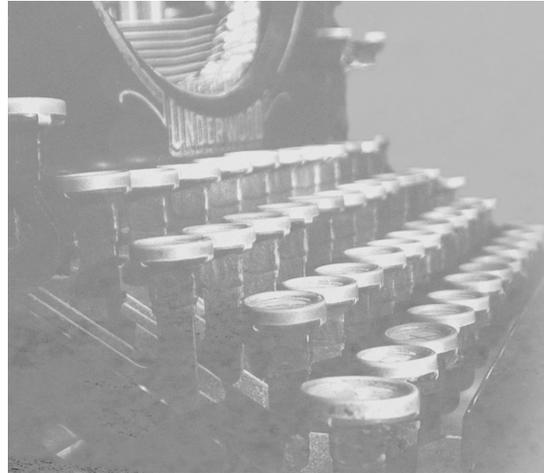
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ennobling and exhilarating at the hour; but what sort of feeling will its memory create in after days? And though with hearts of stone, incapable of regret, the actors in it may pass off the stage of earthly activity, their children and their children's children will not, we should think, be very proud of the part their ancestors took in such exploits.

II. THEN, AGAIN, WE SUGGEST THAT, IN THIS SORT OF DEALING WITH THE LORD'S PROPHETS, THERE IS AN AWFUL POSSIBILITY OF RETRIBUTION. --In this respect, we are quite sure the words of our Lord have a terrible meaning, "They that take the sword shall perish by the sword." There is a public-house still pointed out in Staffordshire where, at a drunken frolic, some man, to show his hatred and contempt of Christianity, literally hung a Bible on a spit, and roasted it before the fire, basting it as he would have done a joint of meat, until it fell to pieces. So far, we suppose, it was a good lark, real fun; the story, however, does not end here, but goes on to say that, soon after, the man was smitten with a peculiar disease, his flesh rotting and falling off his bones, and his death being one of awful and terrible despair. History is full of the records of men and women who having, in some form or other, "roasted" the prophets of the Lord, have met with a fearful retributive fate, even in this life. This method of dealing with the Lord's prophets is, therefore, a long way from being a satisfactory one; and we say to those who are tempted in this direction, "Forbear." "Touch not the Lord's anointed, and do His prophets no harm."

III. BUT THE METHOD IS ALSO VERY UNSATISFACTORY, SEEING THAT, IF IT DOES GET RID OF ONE JEREMIAH, IT THEREBY OFTEN CREATES OTHERS. --The blood of the martyrs has been said to be the seed of the Church. It was no uncommon thing, in the days when burning and crucifying and pulling to pieces by wild beasts the soldiers of the Cross was common, for men and women to leave the ranks of the persecutors and take their places alongside the sufferers, convinced and won over by the evident peace and consolation which they possessed. Cruelty creates pity, and pity leads to enquiry, and enquiry leads to salvation. Publicity means success. Whenever men suffer for Christ's sake, not only does God draw near to bless, but men draw near to enquire. It must be so. Therefore, if the putting down of one Jeremiah means the making of several others, is it not the wisest course for those who are opposed to the multiplication of Salvation soldiers or prophets to let them alone?

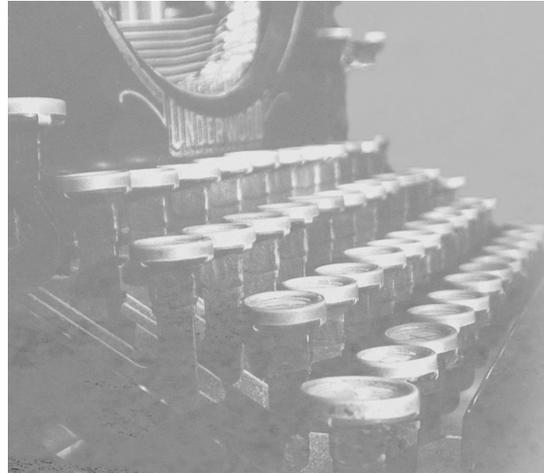


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IV. AFTER ALL, IS IT NOT JEREMIAH'S MESSAGE RATHER THAN JEREMIAH HIMSELF THAT IS OBJECTED TO? --If he had been silent, proper, had behaved himself, not said anything that was unpleasant, or having said it had done so in private, it might have been borne with. But the old man was so stupid --talked about his conscience having a duty to perform for which God held him responsible, would not listen to reason, but would go on in utter disregard of his own safety and the wishes of everybody else. If he would have been quiet no one would have hurt a hair of his head, or if he had prophesied smooth things, such things as the respectables approved and relished, everybody would have been happy, and all would have been well. It was what he said did the mischief. It was not he but this MESSAGE FROM GOD, this truth, this voice, that gave the offence and did the mischief. Now, if they could have got at that and put that in the dungeon, there would have been some sense in the proceeding, but with Jeremiah in the mire there was God Almighty's PROCLAMATION floating about just the same, and if Ebedmelech, that coloured Salvationist, who was one of the king's slaves, had not taken compassion on Jeremiah and got him out to go on repeating and thundering it out, God would have set some one else to work, declaring it. Now, why don't the adversaries set on to this voice of God which speaks through the prophets. Could they not get all the prophecies and records of Calvary, and Judgment, and Heaven, and Hell, and Eternity, and God, shut up somewhere, shut up fast--blotted out--destroyed--so that this unpalatable, hateful message about sin, and judgment, and mercy should never disturb them more--should never be told to their children, or their customers, or influence their people? How could this be done? That would be an effectual method of ending the race of Jeremiahs, and save a great deal of trouble indeed.

V. But after all, are we not still wide of the mark, and is it not the great AUTHOR OF THE VOICE HIMSELF THAT IS WANTED? If He who raised up and sent Jeremiah to say, "Go forth or perish," could have been tied with cords and let down into a dungeon and KEPT THERE, that would be a practical method of dealing with the trouble, and, let us say, the only one. Yes, that is the plan. Oh ye who oppose and agitate and dungeon Salvation Army Prophets, the Jeremiahs of modern times, because they say, and will say over and over again, and will not be stopped saying, that you must repent or perish, leave Sodom or be burnt in Hell, forsake your sins or be damned in them, we are not the authors of the statements, we do not originate the



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threatenings. The controversy is not between you and The Salvation Army. If you do let us, all of US, officers, and rank and file, down somewhere with cords, into some dungeon, out of sight for ever, GOD WILL REMAIN, and He is the difficulty. Jehovah will still confront you, and until the day of grace is past He will, because He is more pitiful to you than you are to your poor selves, still find some who will deal honestly with you in delivering His message, and failing that, He will still go on sounding in your consciences, in the depths of your souls, TURN OR BURN, REPENT OR DIE!

Therefore, you objectors, whom this truth makes uncomfortable and unsettled, quarrel not with us; turn your attention to the truth itself, and deal with the Author of it. Thank God, there is a very simple way open to you, in which you can most readily bring yourself into harmony with the message and with Jehovah, its Author, and with your own happiness and interests, and with The Salvation Army, and all other faithful prophets, and that is by departing from your sins, obeying God, and accepting the mercy offered through Jesus Christ. Do this, and do it quickly.

Meanwhile we want to insert an advertisement in The War Cry. Here it is –

WANTED JEREMIAHS!

The real old-fashioned sort. There is a notion abroad that they don't fit this dispensation. That only gentle, tender, loving persuasions and entreaties are in harmony with these New Testament times. It is all a mistake! Never in the world's history were fearless, resolute, whole-souled prophets called for and needed more than now. Come forth, ye men of God, with brows of brass and nerves of iron, and hearts big with the love of Calvary, and the thunders of Jehovah's wrath.

"Wanted veritable Jeremiahs, to tell the truth, the whole truth, please or displease, dungeon or no dungeon, mire or no mire! To tell it in the Monarch's court, and the Nobleman's mansion, and the Poor Man's cottage; but specially are Jeremiahs, MORE JEREMIAHS, and STILL MORE JEREMIAHS wanted in the Halls, and Theatres, and Barracks, and Public Open-air Meeting Places of The Salvation Army, To all whom it may concern, **"WANTED JEREMIAHS!"**