

## **BIBLE LESSON XXV.**

Isaiah 11:1

### **A GOLDEN PROMISE**

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.”

Isaiah, a Hebrew prophet, writing about the time of the founding of Rome (753 B.C.), is here foretelling the coming to the world some time in the future from his own period, of a man who should know all things without instruction from any other man and do all things without any example to incite him

There are two ways of prophesying coming events. One is by scientific information reckoned from unvarying data according to unvarying law, and the other is from the spirit of revelation when the mind opens a closed gate and discloses scenes and events about to take place or already transpired.

The prophet of revelation saw the darkness of the day on which Jesus was crucified ages before “there was darkness from the sixth unto the ninth hour.”

The Chaldean astronomer calculated the eclipse of the sun for the exact date, and the astronomer at Greenwich today will agree with him that on the hills of Galilee and over the doomed walls of Jerusalem’s proud temples the sun was forbidden to shine on the day of the crucifixion.

The Revelator always sees the mental or metaphysical cause for the transaction while the scientist is regulating his telescope and figuring *solis stationes*. History notes both with impartial pen pictures.

In Isaiah we find prophecies of a Messiah to come. When He should have come people would be different. In astronomy we read of new planetary relations necessarily affecting physical nature.

Jewish revelators were not the only ones who were expecting a great Master and Teacher and Savior to come. Egypt and India were looking for one who should understand the mystery of life and handle death and misery with the fingers of an artist skillfully transforming smeary pigments into living landscapes.

The question of ages had been then as now, "Who am I, whither am I bound and what is my mission?"

The highest philosophy of India had concluded that to "get rid of life, to get rid of living," was the only way to mastery over human conditions – unless one should come to teach them better. They said, "The passions are evil. The passions are masters of mankind, not mankind of the passions. Thus evil is master. To live knowing that old age, disease, decrepitude, death, await us, is not life that is worthwhile. Let us get rid of life – rid of the necessity for living."

So they stilled their sensations by their will and buried themselves in the sand, or lay like logs under the sal trees till the birds of the air

nested on their faces and taught their young to fly from their still foreheads. Yet it availed them nothing.

The Egyptians had concluded that the "I Am" of the universe is as present in man as the gods, but only the dead must have the book telling man that he is "I AM THAT I AM," for the truth at its highest is dangerous for the masses; only He that should come could live knowing truth and how to save from the evils of nature."

"Why do I feel powerful, yet the signs of my power are wanting?" they cried.

"Why should the earthquake, the tidal wave, hunger, separation, injustice, triumph of wrong over right, foil me?"

They had no answer.

They cut their flesh and went naked, cold, hungry, despised and rejected, hoping to propitiate Deity, win worthiness of mastery – yet still no satisfaction.

They had a strange habit of blindfolding themselves and turning around and around to shut off their knowledge of where they might be, and while all their comrades waited eagerly questioning for the right way to mastery over nature, the blindfolded gave answers.

It is blessed to know that they got truth after truth in their eager searching, but mastery should be given only to him who should live the life knowing the law, obedient to law, transcending the law.

The constant mention of the true God had given the Jews of old a truer conception of Deity than any other people of the earth held,

and this germ of truth should never die from among them, their prophets declared, for even in the last days of the world ten men should be found "laying hold of the skirts of him that is a Jew, saying, 'We will go with you, for we have heard that you have the true God.'"

Out of the twelve tribes of Israel there was only one left as a kingdom in Isaiah's time. That was Judah, and she was fast approaching the most ignominious humiliation. She was about to be known no more as a kingdom, but only as an outcast memory of greatness.

The twelve tribes of Israel signify the twelve divisions of the mind. They all have some spiritual word or feeling, but the tribes Israel and Judah, hold out the longest when the pressure of the material claims is great. Ten parts of the mind are easily led captive to Babylon, or the claim that "we shall all die when our time comes, suffer old age, poverty, sorrow, and none can stay us," if nature so orders.

This is not true, and two parts of the mind resent it - Israel, the spiritual feeling, and Judah, the spiritual word; but Israel the feeling, and Judah the word are not united and the feeling is lost or hidden while the word keeps on speaking.

"The kingdom of Judah shall go down," said Isaiah. The martial greatness of David is a long past memory, the gorgeous victories of Solomon are ages departed. The follies of David and the adulteries of Solomon have wiped out the chances for worldly honors for

the religious kingdom for evermore, and not until the religion of truth shall be based to its lowest point with no sign of any possibility of rising, shall the simple father of kings, Jesse, the Bethlehemite, send forth from the humiliated stem or stock of his descendants, Jesus.

Isaiah knows that where the true God is named there will be always a possibility of beginning anew, like the oaks of Palestine which will bud and branch at the smell of water as long as there is a stump remaining.

Assyria, the intellect, and Egypt, the senses, may be cut down like the fir and the pine and the cedar never to flourish against spirit anymore, but though the word of truth be hushed up and shamed down, like the oak trees of Bushan up it will spring when a Mary of Bethlehem is dedicated to Jehovah.

More than seven hundred years after Isaiah promised this rod from the stem of Jesse, Jesus came fulfilling all the prophecies, "The spirit of the Lord (the law), the spirit of wisdom, of understanding, the spirit of counsel, of might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord," did indeed rest upon Him.

These seven "spirits" or seven words of affirmation found by scientific reasoning were all with Him from the beginning and He needed not to be taught of them.

Isaiah makes three movements of this prophecy. First, the description of the man; second His teachings; and thirdly, the effect of His teachings when at the last the ensign or banner of God should be raised and unto it as

a doctrine flashing from west to east, the gentiles or whole world should come, and "its rest should be glorious," for "they shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain."

He should know how to raise the dead, heal the sick, cast out sins, give good everywhere by His word.

The very wisest who had lived before Moses and Abraham had found out that there is a vital spark glowing within every living creature.

While this vital spark is burning through the system, life and health shine as an alabaster vase might shine with an oriental candle flaming within it. When the system gets covered with the dust of earthiness or the ways of the flesh, intellect, the vital spark, does not illuminate it, and the body wraps itself around with death.

They said, those magi of old, that the vital spark of life was not in any human being's power to restore when once it ceased to burn.

They noticed that a man might keep his physical body healthy and alive by eating and drinking and by satisfactory honors and ample possessions, up to a certain point, but beyond that point, unless he knew how to feed the vital spark so that it would spring anew within him, his end had surely come, and none could restore him.

They did not know what would rekindle or feed the vital spark of heavenly flame. They saw that though you might eat the finest flesh and drink the choicest wines, though you might have the loveliest home, and princes

and potatoes might flatter and fawn at your feet, this vital spark would turn away unfed, and would not glow to fan your body into life or health unless it had been fed with its own kind of food. And nobody knew what its food should be.

Jesus, who could rekindle the vital spark in the most dead of all appearances, said, "The flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."

He knew that the master in Israel had no rekindling quality unless he knew His words. For the vital spark which has power to keep us alive and well forevermore, will only feed on words; and, moreover, will only glow and flame when the words of Jesus are spoken. Hence there is no life outside of Christ Jesus. "My words are life to them that find them and health to all their flesh."

There is a science of the Christ, or an orderly and systematic finding of the vital spark so that it shall glow and shine brighter and brighter, as there is a science of the stars and their movements. This science was prophesied by Isaiah as to be perfectly demonstrated by the Man who should be born in Bethlehem from the humbled stem of Jesse.

Isaiah felt as a revelator what we now know as a science, that a mind that has a word of the Christ quality whether as courage or judgment or knowledge of law, will spring forth at the least sign of hope as the stumps of the Palestine oaks will branch at the smell of water.

The coral animals that build the islands can only live in the aerated foam formed by breasting the angry billows. So some natures will only rise to breach spiritual food and demonstrate spiritual vitality when the heavy waters of sorrow, defeat, ignominy, beat them back.

King Bruce of Scotland felt his noble courage faltering when pursued by enemies and distrusted by friends. At the sight of a persevering little spider defeated again and again in its attempt to rise to a certain height on its tiny thread, but finally at the tenth effort succeeding, Bruce sprang to his feet. "Shall a Bruce have less courage than a spider?" he cried, and he put forth the rod of his courage to victory.

"Build on resolve and not upon regret."

Whoever faces the deepest feeling that stirs him when failure seems to have him down will find that there is a conviction within his own soul that he has a right to success. This is the vital spark ready to flame if you feed it with words.

"Thy word was a lamp unto my feet and a light (or guide) unto my path."

The hunger of this fire of the soul can only be fed by the strongest words you have ever heard.

In science we learn to face all the feelings with right words till the whole body glows and the whole character flames with good health, good judgment, and hospitality along every line.

Now the world has the words that will fan the vital spark through all the being into a health out of the reach of sickness, a peace out of the reach of pain, a life out of the reach of death, a success out of the reach of defeat. The world must not deny this. The world must not listen when the most popular magazine of the day tells us that all mankind now rests under the era of bafflement and despair. It must not believe the scholars when they tell that only those plays and songs and preachers describing defeated man are popular. The world must not believe anybody who says that the Omar Khayyam pictures of the soul flying desolate are more popular than the songs of deliverance and the teachers of triumph.

When the actor impersonating the potter struggling to revive the lost art of the Tatswood pottery is at the last day likely to fail because no one will even give him a hod of coal, yet the fires of his ever-young soul springs up crying, "I will begin again!" And if then you fail? "Begin again!" Why does the audience, away to the galleries, applaud if to be defeated absolutely is more popular than to rise on the wings of the words of the soul? "Success and not failure is my birthright."

Isaiah understands how to teach a nation, a religious body, a man, what is true, better than the teachers of today, for he sees the Man whom we, 2500 years after him, call Messiah, smite the whole earth with the words of His twelve lessons of life science, and that the profoundest doctrine ever enunciated is,

“Judge not after the sight of the eyes, nor after the hearing of the ears,” for so shall thy Master teach thee, Himself fulfilling the law. When ye shall “judge not according to appearance,” they shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain.

The prophecy reads that they that shut their eyes and stop their ears from evil shall dwell on high. Their bread shall be sure. Their waters shall not fail. They shall partake of the living substance, even the word of God.

“There is a substance pervading all the worlds of the universe,” said the philosophers of antiquity. It fills all things. It is too fine for the senses to recognize. It is only handled by the words of the mind. Nay, the words of the mind are too coarse to handle this substance that pervades all things; it must be touched only by the understanding of the mind. And the understanding of truth is the only touch fine enough to mold this substance, which is truth itself.

Out of it is made happiness, peace, delight. This substance is Truth. Truth is God. God is the only substance. Only they who know that it is not truth which call us bones and flesh and nerves; only they who know that it is not truth which says that there are any thoughts or any substance out of which to make evil, can touch the mount where there is nothing to hurt or destroy.

How fine is the writing on the “ensign” Isaiah saw should be lifted up in these days!

Is not this the acme of “judging not according to the sight of the eyes nor the

hearing of the ears," when we know that it as bad for the preacher of the wickedness of killing as it is for the slayer to slay, for

He who thinks that he can slay a life –

Or he who thinks life can be slain –

These both do err, for life is God,

And God cannot be slain.

There is no substance out of which to make one who can kill. There is no substance out of which to make one who thinks such things can happen.

There is only God.

Isaiah says that the gentiles will hasten to rest under this banner.

"And its rest shall be glorious!"

Ho! Ye who toil and labor to earn your bread; rest under this teaching. Your rest shall be on the topless mount of the living God. Christ Jesus has come.

Rest, pale mother, under the ensign of the truth Jesus Christ taught – there is only God – and the reviving winds of the hilltops of Paradise shall fan your white brow and set your tired feet among the green fields of love, and your "rest shall be glorious."

Come, world-weary traveler, drink from this water of the life Christ Jesus preached – listen not to the noise of the teachers of bafflement and despair – the triumphant song of your own soul defies them. Captivity is led captive. Christ Jesus has come, and they that come under His ensign know no evil. For them God the good is all.

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