

BIBLE LESSON XXVIII.

Isaiah 37:1

AWAKE THOU THAT SLEEPEST

Here is a lesson that tells religious people – truly God-loving people – what to do today with the great trust combinations, the soulless corporations and unequal opportunities of human beings on the planet.

Now, the naming of these things does not make them realities by any means, any more than naming and describing a nightmare makes it a reality, though all its Gorgons have seemed more real than the presence of your loving mother near you all the time.

We name what seems evil in order to take away its appearance, or seeming.

It is a great nightmare which insists that in a world occupied by the good entirely, any other actions can be going on except good. Then the whole business of those who know that it is only a dream is to awaken the world to truth. Paul cried, “Awake, thou that sleepest!”

The object lesson which is here presented from Isaiah Chapter 37, is the explicit direction to us, and by following it we can stop this great amassing of riches at the expense of the helpless (so described) and the strange situation of a few able to withhold opportunities from the many.

Historically the object lesson was placed on the boards 712 B.C. Hezekiah was a good and pious King of Judah. Sennacherib was the idolatrous King of the powerful Assyrians. They met in battle in exactly the same way we will meet in battle the Assyrian monarch, capitalization of today.

Hezekiah set his idea of God out plainly before all the people in the temple. You will notice that he never compromised his description of God by admitting for an instant that it was God who permitted the Assyrians to get such powerful odds against Jerusalem.

In the science of mind it is very important that we speak accurately, just as it is very important that we say four and two are six in a great problem in trigonometry. Mind builds all conditions and circumstances. Then, of course, we must have truth in the mind to build true conditions and circumstances.

If Hezekiah had said once that it was their duty to be "resigned to the troubles God had in His providence assigned to them," the silent victory here recorded could never have taken place.

It is no credit to our reason to be setting up a straw or stone Gorgon to knock down; so it is no credit to our judgment to be setting up such errors in our minds as that God in His providence has seen fit to do this or that which has hurt so sorely.

Only by the accurate description of their God could Hezekiah have defeated with his little handful of material power the army of 185,000 Assyrians pitted against Jerusalem.

Only by the accurate description of God can we defeat the solid phalanx of material riches pitted against the just rights of mankind today.

Fighting the princes and magnates of the planet will not make them less. It will only put the power from them into the hands of ruffians, who will not be half as wise in dealing with it as those already in power are.

Hezekiah, with his kingdom, had been having a long, hard struggle to live against such a state of affairs, just as the good and honest people of today feel that they have a hard time to get on in the world with such great corporations chewing them up and working against them all the time, while dishonesty seems to flourish and goodness is laughed at.

Sennacherib, the king of a great corporation that has swallowed all the smaller enterprises of the whole country round about, sent word to Hezekiah that if he would work in his interests he would feed and clothe and house him well. He told Hezekiah it was no use for him to stand up and declare that the invisible Lord Jehovah would or could defend Jerusalem against him because so far everything had been obliged to yield. He mentioned the mining interests, the manufacturing interests, the political machinery, the shipping interests, educational efforts (under the term "gods," of course) that had already succumbed entirely and now he advises religion to do likewise.

Hezekiah never answered Sennacherib in words face to face. He took the letter that described how everything was yielding and "spread it before the Lord." Then he said, "It is true that all these interests," under the symbolic names of "kingdoms," of course, "have succumbed to Sennacherib whose god was Nisroch (Monopoly) but none of these interests of humanity have stood forth and declared themselves under the unfailing protection of the Lord God Almighty."

"No, they had all hoped to fight materiality with materiality (mentioned as material God against material God, of course). But as for me, I do not believe in meeting evil with evil, matter with matter. I do not believe that there is any need of martyrdom or suffering or failure or defeat of any kind for those who trust in the true God."

Then Hezekiah declared his highest ideal of God. Hear him. There is no "flinchy" speaking of yielding to Sennacherib's hosts, "if it be the Lord's will." He knows, if he knows anything, that his highest ideal of the Divine Being is not of one who has to do evil that good may come. If he had admitted that idea into his description of God he would have been setting up a less than the true God, and an imaginary God cannot meet Sennacherib's host. Mind that.

Today we cannot try any halfway God on the situation. This description of Hezekiah's is the only true one: "O, Lord of Hosts, God of Israel, that dwelleth between the cherubim (of love and protection), Thou art the God, even

Thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. Thou hast made heaven and earth. Save us that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that Thou art the Lord, even Thou only."

As he thus described his highest ideal of God, the thought went over to the camp of the Assyrians, whose soldiers were the personified beliefs in the power of trusts and monopolies, and 185,000 men lay "dead corpses" without the sound of a battering ram, or arrow, or stone.

The greatest fight of the ages was in idea. And the two ideas that fought were the perfect description of God and the imagination of what God is.

The might of the gentiles, unsundered by the sword, Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord.

"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds."

And now, who is there to arise in the power of his might for the honor of the good, and describe his highest idea, of the good as having the right to reign? The only reason Sennacherib and his hosts have come down upon the world in spite of religious teachings, is because the highest idea, of what ought to be, has not been described as what is.

The speaking out from the silence where the ideal has always been hidden by the repetition of the nonsense that "God, in His inscrutable wisdom, permits evil, to which we must bow our heads," is the divine "glance of truth" which will lay every trust company,

every unjust corporation, every unrighteous scheme, low as Sennacherib's host.

On even a small scale of human experience this principle will work. It is better for those people who have been threatened with poverty and want through any sort or kind of combination of hard luck against them, to make up their mind what their highest ideal of God is and talk to it and tell it what they expect of such a character.

Write down your highest ideal. Read it over. If you have cut under the truth of the true God you must erase that part and make it right. Only the highest idea can come against the culmination of the series of errors in the algebra of human experience wherewith no value stands for soul, all value.

No preaching but the highest ideality can meet Sennacherib's host of believers that the god Nisroch (monopoly of the goods of the world) is in rule.

The highest ideal is the only real. It has been kept silent by our not speaking it forth. We are the word. We speak as we please – that which we speak stands forth. No compromise. The true God is that "Thou Only" of Hezekiah.

The actual conscious speaking or thinking of truth has an astonishing effect upon hosts of minds. Any idea that is right will accomplish wonders of good by laying hosts of nightmares low.

For instance, a few years ago somewhere a man or woman who had believed in sickness and disease as a part of their inheritance, and

had tried every material thing in creation from foreign travel to honeybees' stings and southern flies thought suddenly as all these things had failed there was nothing more to do but to do nothing. Accordingly that hitherto unsuccessful invalid determined to do nothing. The same idea went on the wings of the winds and simultaneously all over the planet chronics of a certain type of mind determined to lie still and see what would become of them.

That was a beautiful state of mind. The silence into which they committed themselves is the ideal where all good lies waiting. They all got well. Their old maladies dropped down like Sennacherib's host.

Afterwards certain of them said they thought of God as a healing presence while they lay there. It came to them that God is health and not sickness. Others said they felt that the silence is nature's restorative: *vis medicatrix naturae*. "In the silence, in the silence, God speaketh to my soul."

In great sickness or pain or trouble lie very still. Lie still as death. Down through your mind will fall the healing God.

In such cases as this, however, carefully describe your highest ideal of God and tell it what you expect of it. Don't compromise. Don't give in because you remember what good people have suffered. I tell you they need not have suffered if they had believed in the true God. Cut out of your mind such memories. Cut out of your mind that you want the will of God to be done. The will of

your old trouble-sending deity isn't worth remembering.

Just read how unconditioned Great Hezekiah's God was, and, bearing in mind what great things the unconditioned God accomplished for him, insist on His doing the same for you.

There is a little side lesson in this one of Hezekiah's demonstration which is useful as showing how lovingly there is a goodness shaping our ends for us which we may have demonstrated in the smallest items.

Hezekiah's name meant "Strength of Jehovah." Thus he had all strength on his side. He ought to have just given thanks for his strength just as Jesus Christ always did before a miracle. You will see that Hezekiah was a trifle afraid of the strength of materiality – of the opposing conditions. Without entering into any explanation of how this shows that "in our greatest strength," we cannot help seeing that each person's name stands for his easiest honors and also for his greatest errors or weaknesses.

If anyone knows the significance of his own name he knows what it is he can demonstrate most quickly.

The shadow of that great good is always the fear that things are exactly the opposite. If your name is Rebekah you are chained to prosperity, and by pulling on the principle of bounty by your giving thanks that you have such great possessions belonging to you, they will come flying into your sight.

Very likely you are complaining of poverty and crying with longings the very moments when you ought to be giving thanks that your highest ideal of prosperity is yours now.

Suppose your name is William. Whatever you put after the two words "I am" will demonstrate promptly. Very likely you will have very intense experiences, because you speak well of yourself sometimes, and ill of yourself sometimes. You should identify yourself with the highest Name you know. You should be like Jesus Christ, and be so at one with truth that you cannot distinguish between truth and yourself. You remember that He said, "I am truth." The highest ideal you can conceive - you are it. You can say "I am Omnipotent Spirit," and prove it.

Suppose your name is Francis. Your birthright is freedom. You should say often "I am free." Probably you have a great habit of getting under the personal influence of other people. The instant you get under them your judgment gets biased.

Your name may be Mary, and your affirmation ought to be, "I am honored and glorified." But very likely you are given to mourning because your human experience is bitter.

This is one of the little side lessons off from the main one of the Hezekiah prayer for deliverance, but the good that folds us around, waiting to be announced, blesses even the tiniest item of our life when we acknowledge it.

"Acknowledge Me in all thy ways (in the smallest transactions and situations) and I

will direct thy paths." Set your mind steadfastly to the name and the character of the good according to your ideal.

That highest good is the real. The ideal is the real. No matter how silent you have hitherto been on the subject now is the time to rise with the right description of the true God.

There will be no more pain, no more poverty, no more discord in your life, with the acknowledgment that is right. What is your name? You were not named carelessly. The word that you bear is your word that will come flying to demonstrate itself when you speak it and bravely refuse the easiest error into which you are habitually slipping.

Who is a God like the true God? Who redeemeth all life from destruction, who healeth all diseases, who crowneth with loving kindness everything and everybody, every instant, wave only the true God? How great and efficient and kind is your God?

That one whom you have been describing is the one who dealt with you up to date.

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