

## **BIBLE LESSON XXXII.**

Jeremiah 35

### **BUT ONE SUBSTANCE**

This burning of the prophecies of Jeremiah by Jehoiakim, King of Judah, brings to remembrance the old Latin proverb, *Qui vult decipi, decipiatur*, which means, "Let him who wishes to be deceived, be deceived."

Jeremiah had written to Jehoiakim that there were two ways for him to save Judah from destruction – one was by yielding to Babylon which, though under the horizon of power (that is, not apparently the coming power), was yet going to conquer all nations; and the other way was to call a great assembly to prayer as Hezekiah had done about a hundred years before.

There were no signs of Babylon attacking Jerusalem and Jehoiakim burned the roll containing the advices of Jeremiah. They seemed to him nonsense. As a king he felt that his words and actions must be worth more than a prophet's impressions, and he felt a pompous certainty that he knew his own business best. At any rate he wanted not to believe Jeremiah, and it was his choice to set up a scheme defying the defense of prayer and the defense of horsemen. Babylon stood for the intelligence of worldliness, and prayer stood for the intelligence of spirit. Jehoiakim

did not want to use intelligence in being safe. He just wanted to be safe. So he burned the instructions of Jeremiah. It was as though a man should burn the bill of goods purchased by him at some store, thinking that would end the matter.

You have heard before that "the letter killeth." The kingdom of Judah stood for the letter of truth. It lived longer than the kingdom of Israel, which stood for the feeling of truth. Hoshea, the last king of Israel, was weak and irresolute, though good enough, and was overthrown.

That is the way with all feelings not headed by judgment. Feeling causes people to do things because they like or dislike. They love somebody sentimentally, and no matter what that one would do in a position of trust they put him there. They dislike somebody and no matter what his fitness for a position they would not let him have it. So their kingdom wanes. All things get to running intolerably, like the watch which the owner cannot use and the watchmaker cannot see why it will not run when its works are so perfect, till they find its balance-wheel is magnetized.

Judah stood for the word or letter which also kills itself. When once word and feeling are married they give good judgment. Jehoiakim said exactly the right words but he said them without intelligence. He was like one who says that the child with typhoid fever has nothing at all the matter, because he never saw such a case and hasn't the remotest idea what he has to meet, but has heard the

scientific statement that all claims of evil are nothing at all. So he says the words and goes to sleep to wake and find the child dead, and himself condemned for criminal carelessness. As Jehoiakim refused both the intelligence of spirit and the intelligence of armies he was wound up. Zeal without judgment, and word without judgment, are equally self-destructive.

Both Jeremiah and Jehoiakim believed in law and so both had to fulfill the law exactly as it demands. Of course, there is a higher than law, under whose wings one can throw himself and come out unscathed, but neither of these men recognized this in a way to save their kingdom.

Jeremiah did not appeal to the highest nature of Jehoiakim; Jehoiakim did not permit it to speak.

We get the rewards of that principle we serve. If we believe in Spanish flies as the cure for neuralgia we must use Spanish flies till they fail us. Jeremiah believed that the children of Judah had done evil and so, of course, he expected evil to reward them. It was Hahnemann's *similia similibus curantur*.

It goes with the belief in the law of evil that punishment must follow offenses, and what sort of seeds we sow those we reap. There is an intelligent repudiation of this law which will set anybody free from the consequences of his own past foolish or ignorant words.

But neither the Israelite nor the Judahite performs intelligently except when turning his annulling words toward God. Jeremiah, Isaiah, Stephen, Guyon, were all martyrs to

their belief in evil as belonging to them. Looking into material things for their own sake, they will be sure to give you their kind of fruitage.

The man who invented the telescope was put into a dungeon. The man who constructed the microscope starved to death. They had no intelligence of life. If you feed a man who tells you he is starving while you know he is not honest, yet your principle of conduct compels you to do kindly by him, he will be the means of bringing you some good in some way unintentionally. If you feel tenderness and mercy some way he will get you a merciful return for your action.

Say never affection was wasted.

Affection never was wasted.

If it enrich not the heart of another,

Its waters returning back to their fountains

Shall fill them full of refreshment.

That which the fountain rejected

Returning again to the fountain.

Probably the point that will strike the intelligent metaphysician as strongest in this lesson is that there are two ways of denying evil and matter: one intelligently, and the other blindly.

One of the first propositions of Christian doctrine is that there is but one substance filling all space, all places, all things. There is but one substance.

As there can be but one omnipresence of cause this substance everywhere present is God. God is good. Thus all is good. Then

there follows the necessary negation to such a promise, viz., then there is no evil.

The intelligent acceptance of this reasoning has the most straightening and purifying effect upon character. All appetites, passions, tempers, diseases stop as if by magic. The blind acceptance of this reasoning causes people to act exactly like Jehoiakim. Whatever appetite or passion or temper they had before they now say it is good because there is no evil. Now that one little turn of metaphysics contains all the law and the gospel. It makes all the difference between intelligence and ignorance, light and darkness.

The one who says his conduct is good when it is manifestly bad is as much a believer in evil and will take as much punishment for evil as he did before he spoke the words. For demonstration is the accompaniment of truth understood. Whoever says there is no evil because good is all will show forth good only, else he does not believe a word he is saying. He really is thinking that evil is all. So he shows forth what he is thinking. It is just the same with sickness. Unless we show out health at once when we say there is no sickness because God is all and God cannot be sick, of course we are believing within our minds that sickness is real. It is as plain as the sunshine what we believe in. We show it out.

Remember the words of Jesus, "According to thy faith be it unto thee." A blind woman believed that she could see, no matter how she had been deceived by teachings about matter

and evil, because God has made her. She held onto her conviction that if God made her perfect she really must be perfect, until suddenly her sight came as clear as crystal. There have been many such cases where the conviction was based on intelligent reasoning, which suddenly showed forth in health, even in straightening crooked bones.

Truth understood is as straightening to character as to bones.

This is Christian science.\* We do not understand the science unless we demonstrate it, so Jehoiakim had no intelligent conception of his denial of evil and matter. It is intelligence that is God. It is the word of intelligence that is God manifest.

It is here that the presence and office of Jesus Christ come in. The mind has been so accustomed to sophistries that it seems to be easy to lead even quite bright-appearing people off into byways and hedges and blind alleys. This name holds the mind to judgment and to demonstration of goodness.

It is at this point of statement that students of science halt and begin to think that it is license to evil and not power of good the science effects. Here they stop to accuse each other and to draw off from each other. Here at this juncture they have to start their reasoning over again, clinging fast to the name that stands for wholeness and goodness. At this

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\* The term "Christian science" as used in these lessons stands for the scientific teachings of Jesus Christ as understood by Emma Curtis Hopkins. - *Ed. note.*

point many sorrowful experiences face the student. He will take them into his talk and reasoning or refuse them. Here he feels he is right and everybody else in the wrong, and he refuses to let any man buy or sell save as he has "his mark on his forehead or in his right hand."

This is the place where those who choose to declare that God is not respecter of persons and has filled with His substance and power all men alike, begin to create or enter into the new heaven and the new earth, where they hunger no more, neither thirst any more, and their joy no man can take away. Here is where intelligence seems to fail and one has to rise and announce that intelligence is God, and as God cannot fail so intelligence cannot fail. Here is where provisions seem to stop and one has to rise and announce as God cannot be cut off so support cannot be cut off or stop.

There are times when the mind has to see only one side of the question on intelligent principle. There have been many examples of this sudden rising to announce truth from the Jesus Christ standpoint and the effect has been wonderful.

It is not sentimental wishing and it is not simple denial and affirmation that work when the forces of the claims of evil meet the scientific statements. It is honest conviction. And "conviction is not properly speaking conviction till it develops itself into action."

Looking over the young people just starting out upon the voyage of human experience, strict science says to each one: "Rise, when

sorrow, pain, disappointment come to you, and say with all the force of your mind, I refuse them! Jesus Christ told me not to experience this and I will not."

Whatever came knocking at your door will fall away from your lot. The next test will be easier. And so you will demonstrate God in life. You will be a living glory to the world. You will bring the new heaven and the new earth, and the former will be forgotten.

Look at the gray-haired, deeply wrinkled faces of the people you meet. What aged them thus? Drinking the cup of sorrow, pain, disappointment, supposing that it was the common lot of mankind. Never. If they had refused to feel badly, refused to think of the pain, sorrow, and disappointment, because God never intended it for them, they would be beautiful as the archangels, living lights in the dark places, healing to the nations.

Now that the science of good has come we will accept the glorious offering.

There is only one beauty, health, bounty, buoyant youth in truth.

The letter of denial must be united to the conviction that it is a truth. The feeling of denial must be united to do the word of right reasoning. Then we enter upon our rightful kind of life. It is just beginning to be proven how foolish the sufferings of good people have been through mistaken notions of God's intentions towards them.

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