



LESSON XI.—DEC. 11.

Trying To Destroy God's Word.

Jeremiah xxxvi., 20-32. Read the chapter. Memory verse, 32.

Home Readings.

- M. Jer. xxxvi., 1-9.—God's word delivered to Jeremiah.
- T. Jer. xxxvi., 20-32.—Trying to destroy God's word.
- W. Isa. xl., 1-17.—God's word shall stand forever.
- T. Matt. xxiv., 29-51.—'My words shall not pass away.'
- F. Jer. xxvi., 1-24.—'The Lord hath sent me unto you.'
- S. Jer. xxxv., 1-19.—The faithful Rechabites—The unfaithful Jews.
- S. I. Pet. i., 1-25.—The word of the Lord endureth forever.

Golden Text.

'The word of our God shall stand forever.'
—Isa. xl., 8.

Lesson Story.

Jeremiah, one of the 'Four Greater Prophets,' was both prophet and priest in Israel for over forty years. He began to prophesy in the thirteenth year of King Josiah, and with unrivalled courage proclaimed God's word faithfully to the gainsaying and back-sliding people as long as he lived.

In the fourth year of Jehoiakim, son of the excellent Josiah, Jeremiah was told by God to write on a roll all his former prophecies, from the first days down to that time. Jehovah would give his erring people another chance to repent and be saved from the awful punishment which must follow their sin. Jeremiah got Baruch to write all the words as he dictated them, and when the roll was finished he asked Baruch to read it to the people. Jeremiah seems to have been forbidden to preach to the people, so he had to send Baruch with the long warning and call to repentance, hoping that in some way it would touch the heart of the people.

Baruch took the book and read it in the temple and on the occasion of a fast he read the message from God to all the people assembled in Jerusalem. This reading came to the knowledge of the princes of Judah, and they sent for Baruch. Having heard the prophecy, they decided that the king ought to hear it, as it was of such vast importance to the nation. They carefully laid the roll away and went to tell the king. He insisted on hearing the book read, so Jehudi began to read it. But instead of being filled with penitence for his sins, the king was filled with rage at the rebuke. Taking the manuscript from the hand of the reader, the king deliberately cut it in pieces with a penknife, and put the pieces one after another in the fire until all the roll was burnt.

The princes begged the king not to destroy God's word, but neither the king nor any of his servants had any fear or repentance toward God. Jehoiakim sent his servants to take Jeremiah and Baruch, probably with the intent to kill them, but God protected his servants. After this God commanded Jeremiah to write again all his prophecies. He did so, and we have them now after about twenty-five hundred years in the book of Jeremiah.

Lesson Hints.

'The roll'—the manuscript book containing all Jeremiah's prophecies.

'The winter-house'—the Oriental houses are built with an airy upper story, which is used in summer, and a warmer interior or lower story, which is used in winter. Thus the 'summer' and 'winter' houses simply mean the different apartments of the same house.

'The ninth month'—December. Their year began two weeks before the feast of the Passover.

'A fire on the hearth'—in the brazier, or fire-pan, which was filled with hot coals and set in the middle of the room.

'The penknife'—the knife worn by the scribes and used to sharpen their quill pens.

'Cast it into the fire'—thinking thus to finally and forever destroy the prophecy. But burning the warning could not keep the punishment from coming upon the sinners. Unbelief in God's word cannot make it untrue. We quote from 'Peloubet's Notes' a number of ways in which men may try to destroy God's word:

1. By forbidding people to read it, as is done in several countries.
2. By rejecting the Bible as the word of God, hating it, ridiculing it, perverting it, denying it.
3. By neglecting it, treating it as if it did not exist, letting it remain unread, unstudied; and keeping away from church and Sunday school.
4. By persecuting those who preach and teach it, especially those who have different views of its contents from our own. By attempting to limit investigation, and restrict free thought and discussion.
5. All joking about the Bible, connecting puns and funny stories with its most precious verses, using its truths irreverently. Men thus raise an army of doubts, and make God and heaven and religion unreal, far-off myths instead of present reality.
6. By not obeying its precepts. Only he who does the truth can understand it.

Sometimes we cut out some leaves of the Bible.

1. By denying or softening its warnings and reproofs.
2. By reading only portions of the Bible and not the whole. How many of you have read the whole Bible even once?
3. By recognizing and emphasizing only a part of its great truths.
4. By false interpretations or misrepresentations of its meaning.
5. By seeing truths as expressed in only one form, while every great truth is set forth in many ways by statement, history, parable, psalm, proverb, object lesson and symbol.

Questions.

1. Who was Jeremiah?
2. What was the name of the king who tried to destroy God's word?
3. What was the 'roll' which the king cut up?
4. Was the word of God destroyed?
5. How can we best preserve God's word?

Suggested Hymns.

'Stand up, stand up for Jesus,' 'Search me, O Lord,' 'Jesus is tenderly calling you,' 'Return, O wanderer!' 'O worship the King,' 'Why do you wait?' 'Over the line,' 'Though your sins be as scarlet,' 'Christ receiveth sinful men.'

Practical Points.

A. H. CAMERON.

Trying to destroy God's word. Jeremiah xxxvi., 20-32.

God's word was meant to be heard, not hid. Verses 20, 21.

It is easier to burn the Bible than to destroy God's word. Verses 23-25. Also Matt. xxvii., 35.

They are secure whom God hides. Verse 26.

God's word should not be rejected because it is bitter to the carnal mind. Rejection of that word is sure destruction to the soul. Verses 27-31.

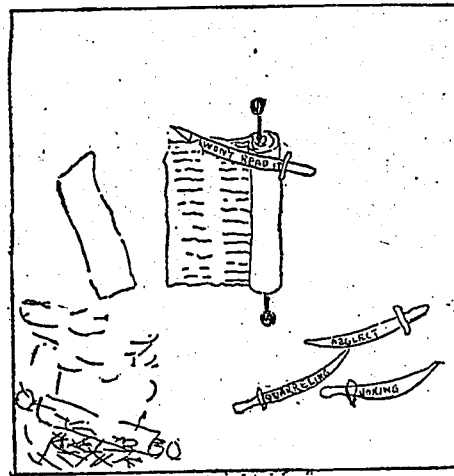
Blessed are they who obey God in the face of fierce persecution. Verse 32.
Tiverton, Ont.

Lesson Illustrated.

Another Bible lesson, the foolish king cutting the roll upon which the prophet had inscribed God's message. Fire and knife cannot destroy it, as he later finds. Not one little iota can pass away. All will be fulfilled. Here is the roll and some of the knives Satan lays by our hands that we may be tempted to destroy the value of the word of God. 'I won't read it,' says one knife, it might shut off some of my pleasures and the determination hardens the heart.

'Neglect' is another. Oh, yes, I will read it some time, but really I am too busy, I want to do something else, and Satan keeps pushing in front of us some new thing we want to do until dust lies thick on the cover and it is lost again. 'Quarreling' is another knife Satan puts in our hands when he finds us bound to read the word. Well then, he says, read it for the sake of some pet theory

of yours, of proving that you are right and your neighbor wrong, and he laughs as he sees the sweet words turned into bitterness and messages of comfort into weapons of offence. Still others of us he leads astray with that knife called 'Joking.' It is so easy to joke about names, and twist the well-known verses so as to raise a laugh. There are so many good stories one can tell; but,



oh! how they stick! Sometime you want the message of joy some verse brings, and, lo! Satan holds up that joke to your mind, and then joy is cut off; you can only think of the laugh. Don't joke about Bible verses or names or facts, they are too great, and good and holy to lower in that way. 'Better not,' far better.

Teach Heroism.

(Mary R. Baldwin, in 'S.S. Times'.)

Children are born hero-worshippers, and mean to be heroes themselves; and it is this love of heroism, so paramount within them, which is always asking for nourishment, and which is one of the strong points which may be seized, upon which to base a high life-purpose for them.

Do these children find in our Sunday-school the encouragement they need for their love of heroism? Is a great deal of our latter-day literature of the sort that illustrates the passage, 'Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ'? Have we not in our reaction from the old standards of good living, dropped too far down? We have been very much afraid of becoming 'goody-goody,' in our pictures of model lives, and have quite mistaken the position of the inspirer. In trying to become natural, we have missed power—the something that must save any work from being commonplace; the quality without which no picture of life can become a living one before the soul's eyes. The children are not only to be amused; their enthusiasm for grand living must be nourished and enlarged through powerful illustrations. They must see heroes pass before them; and here let it be whispered in the ear of consecrated genius: 'Do not think you cheapen your gifts by using them for the Sunday-school. If you have the power of moving the young heart and mind by your pictures, are you not called to be a high priest in the holy place of the temple of your God?'

If gifted ones would only realize this, and would set themselves to the interpretation of truth, surrendering themselves to a high spiritual standard, and not allow themselves to be shadowed by the popular clamor for amusement for the children, not suffer themselves to fear that they will shoot above the experience of the common child, we might have a literature of power for our Sunday-schools.

The suggestion of an 'attendance thermometer' for Sunday-schools, already adopted in some schools, is thus described in the 'Lookout.' 'A large double thermometer, four feet high and correspondingly wide, in which a red ball, two inches in diameter, represents the mercury in the cup, and a red cord the size of a lead pencil represents the standing column in the tube. A slit in the back of the board enables one to raise or lower the cord at will, and so indicate the day's attendance upon the graduated scale on the face, every half-inch of which indicates five.'