

THE

Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter.

VOL. XXXII.

SEPTEMBER, 1894.

No. 9.

ORIGINAL.

THE MODERATOR'S SERMON.*

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In that day shall the Lord of Hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people, and for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.—Isaiah 28 : 5, 6.

As an oasis in the desert, so are these verses with their rich and cheering assurances of divine favor in a context dark with the forecast of terrible judgment soon to be executed. A long persistence in a course of daring and aggravated transgression had ripened the kingdom of Israel for national overthrow. Through gross idolatry and sensuality "the crown of pride" was soon to be "trodden under feet." The "glorious beauty" which was "on the head of the fat valley" was soon to become "a fading flower." The wrathful clouds closing around Samaria, the city of wealth, magnificence and luxury, were about to burst and descend in hurtling hail, furious tempest and overflowing flood. The "hail" would "sweep away the refuge of lies," and the "waters" would "overflow the hiding place." The boasted covenant with death would "be disannulled," and the "agreement with hell" should not stand in the day that God would lay "judgment to the line," and "righteousness to the plummet."

That horrible scourge, the Assyrian invasion, the Lord's "mighty and strong one," was about to be sent forth against the defenceless and doomed northern kingdom. This outrivaling calamity was the forewarned outcome of their incorrigible wickedness, the matured harvest of their own evil sowing. They had rejected God, and now they are rejected by him. In their pride they trusted to themselves, and now, as sheep in an unprotected fold, they are to be the easy prey of the Assyrian wolf. They had sown the wind, and now they are to be carried away by the whirlwind.

But while the kingdom of Israel was in its death agony ;

* Preached at the opening of Synod in the 2d Philadelphia church, May 30, 1894.

placed within his reach. Whatever he could do, he felt it was his duty to do.

Taking counsel with his princes and mighty men, and securing the hearty co-operation both of them and the people, he stopped all the fountains which were without the city; he built up all the wall that was broken down, and raised it up to the tower; he built another wall without; he made darts and shields in abundance; he set captains of war over the people; he gathered them together and spoke to their hearts in these inspiring words: "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him, for there be more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and fight our battles." And the people leaned themselves upon the words of their God-fearing king.

But God was strength to the nation also in its aggressive warfare. The yoke of the king of Assyria was cast off. The Philistines were smitten "even unto Gaza and the borders thereof to the tower of the watchmen and the fenced cities." Having purged out the corruptions his father had brought in, he was enabled to recover the possessions his father had lost.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE MISSION OF THE COVENANT TO THE ISRAELITES.*

BY REV. J. C. M'FEETERS.

For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.—Hosea 3: 4, 5.

These words direct our attention to the Lord's purpose concerning the people of Israel, and our duty to them, in the great work of their conversion. The text is prophetic. The prophet told these things about the people of Israel near 200 years before the captivity; nearly 800 years before Christ; almost 2,700 years ago. The prediction is that Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and afterward return to the Lord.

Many days mean **MANY** days. Since the overthrow of Jerusalem by Titus, more than 1,800 years ago, they have been without all that is herein specified. They have been all these centuries without an organized civil state; without a vital religion with its officers and ordinances; and without revelations from God in any special manner. During these ages the people of Israel have been dispersed over the world. Scarcely a city of importance in which the Jew is not found, and wherever found he is a son of Israel, a recognized Jew, a man who will not permit his nationality to disappear. This is according to the old prophecy, which echoed among the

*The name of the Philadelphia Mission to the Jews.

mountains of Moab, and made King Balak tremble. "From the top of the rocks I see him, from the hills I behold him; lo, the people shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations." Numb. 23: 9.

The Jewish race has ever encountered strong opposition, often endured great persecution; has been expelled by cruel rulers; decimated by massacres; outlawed and oppressed beyond measure.

When Jerusalem was taken by the Romans it is estimated that one million perished. Milman writes, that the Romans, weary of the work of slaughter, sold the people as slaves, though at a low price. Fifty years later there were half a million put to death in northern Africa, and often under the most frightful torments. They suffered greatly in Germany from pillaging and massacres. They were reckoned as the slaves of the emperor. In 1290 they were banished from England and not permitted to enter for four hundred years. More recently they were expelled from France and from Spain. Wherever a Jew lived, or a colony prospered, it was merely to be outraged.

What has been the reason? We will not detain with theories. We want to give facts. The facts are, the Jews have been dispersed, yet not lost; they have been oppressed, but not destroyed; they have been massacred, yet remain in numbers about as many as in their palmiest days.

Wherefore the dreadful and protracted calamities that have fallen upon this people? Let the Book answer: "All Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses, the servant of God, because we have sinned against him." Daniel 9: 11. "If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD; then he will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance." Deut. 28: 58, 59. This accounts for the remarkable distress and continued suffering laid upon this people. The Lord by his prophets told long beforehand that such a condition was inevitably connected with departure from him. The prophecy is merely having its fulfillment.

Wherefore the preservation of this people and their race distinction? Let the Word explain: "Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea, when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of hosts is his name; if those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever. Thus saith the Lord; if heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith the Lord." Jer. 31: 35-37. They are perpetuated according to the prediction of God. We can

find natural reasons, which may satisfy the natural mind, for their dispersion, their preservation and their separation from all people. But the reason which will satisfy the candid Christian is this, they are "the peculiar people" of God, "his peculiar treasure," "to whom pertain the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;" "whose are the fathers;" and who are "for the father's sake beloved;" "of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen." Romans 9: 4, 5.

Let us now look at what God intends to do for them, and by them. God has promised to forgive their sins; restore them to his favor; establish them in the enjoyment of the religion of Jesus Christ.

Here is the promise of him whose name is Faithful: "Behold, the days come saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: This will be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." Jer. 31: 31, 33. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." Zech. 12: 10.

These are prophecies that reach to "the latter days." They have not yet been fulfilled. If any one thinks that the fulfillment has been realized, in its full extent, in the thousands converted under the preaching of the apostles, then glance at Paul's letter written to the Romans a quarter of a century after the pentecostal fires, and the sermons of Peter: "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved." Romans 11: 25, 26. God has purposed the conversion of the Jews; he has foretold it as a part of his great plan of future events; it belongs to the unchangeable certainties of coming time.

The time of their conversion.

"In the latter days." "Behold the whirlwind of the Lord goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind; it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked. The fierce anger of the Lord shall not return, until the Lord have done it; and until he have performed the intents of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it." Jeremiah 30: 23, 24. "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days." Hosea 3: 5. The "latter days" usually mean the dispensation of the gospel. John says, "It is the last time." Paul writes that "In the last days perilous times shall come." The reference of the text is to the times of the gospel; the present times.

The time is by Paul more especially observed by the phrase, "Fullness of the Gentiles." Romans 11: 25. The blindness of Israel will continue until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. Hodge says the fullness of the Gentiles means great multitudes of conversions. The present age beholds the gospel confessed by hundreds of millions of people; and advancing through open doors into every part of every kingdom. Many places are yet unenlightened, but the way is open and the missionaries are on the road; the beautiful feet are treading the mountains; the glad tidings are awaking echoes among the great populations of Asia, Africa and the islands of the sea.

We learn from Paul, in another place, that the Gentiles will not all be converted before the Jews be converted. He says, "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead." Romans 11: 15. The moral resurrection of the world! Does it not appear that we are living in the day, when God is about to perform the most stupendous work of time?

The means of their conversion.

I. The gospel of the cross of Jesus. "And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced and they shall mourn." Zechariah 12: 10. The gospel must be taught to them who have crucified the Lord of glory; they must see the awful deed they have done, or they will not repent. The word, the work, the death, the resurrection of Jesus Christ must be urged upon their attention before either the rain of the Spirit or of their tears shall fall.

II. The outpouring of the Spirit. "I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and of supplications." Zechariah 12: 10. "Fear not, O Jacob; and thou, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen, for I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses." Isaiah 44: 3, 4. In the "latter days" the gospel shall be made known unto them, the Spirit shall come upon them, and they shall come into the church, in numbers and rapidity, that will startle the world.

III. The tender kindness of Christians. "That through your mercy they also may obtain mercy." Romans 11: 31. Salvation has been of the Jews to the Gentiles; and having departed from the Jews, it must return back to them through the Gentiles. What! Will the great God, with resources unlimited, use weak instruments, broken vessels, pieces of clay, to accomplish the great prediction, in which his glory shall rise like the sun and flood the earth with his light? Yes; and the human heart, filled with his love, and governed by his Spirit, is all but omnipotent in bringing souls unto the Lord. "Through your mercy."

The results of the general conversion of the Israelites.

Paul has a conception of the result, but it is so transcendently great he cannot express it. He gives us a glimpse of his thought through an interrogation point. He says: "If the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them be the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fullness?" Romans 11: 12. How much more shall the world be made rich; how much more shall the nations be made rich; rich in all the elements of moral greatness and spiritual excellence? The question is left unanswered. He continues for the thought is uplifting and entrancing, "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" Romans 11: 15. Such an event will dawn upon the world with the splendors of a general resurrection—a moral and spiritual resurrection; the revival of pure religion, and its extension over the world. Christ's universal reign will then be honored; "men shall be blessed in him; and all nations shall call him blessed."

Our duty. Our duty is to believe. Believe the Lord is coming to convert the Abrahamic race; believe the promises that are written as clear as sunbeams.

Our duty is to pray. Prayer is a mighty power in producing conversion, and it is to be used without limitation.

Our duty is to teach. The Jews need to be taught in the gospel; and by personal effort, or sustaining those employed, we ought to present before their eyes the Saviour.

We ought cheerfully to accept of the responsibility of sustaining the missions among the Israelites, already established, and inaugurate more as the tide of the Spirit bears us along.

A SUGGESTION.

In the reports made by the societies to the Women's Presbyterial Society at its last meeting I noticed they were largely taken up with statements of number of members, amount of money raised, method of raising money, etc., etc. Of course this is necessary and helpful. We want to know the condition of each society. By a comparison of methods we may be led to the adoption of the best. The Presbyterial Society is pledged to raise for a special object a certain sum of money, and it is necessary that this be kept constantly before it.

Is there not a danger, however, unless care be taken, that the individuality of the local society be lost or merged into that of the Presbyterial, and that unconsciously we become mere collecting agencies, satisfied with raising a certain sum of money for missionary or other good purposes? To the extent this is true, we fail to accomplish what ought to be our mission.

A wise man has said that only as individuality is preserved can we be a force. That is true of persons, of congregations, and of missionary societies. It is also true that raising money should never take the place of personal service.