

Conference Addresses.

We cannot hold ourselves responsible for every expression of the respective speakers. Many things with which we may not wholly agree are inserted as being either suggestive or worthy of consideration.

JEHOVAH'S NAME AND ISRAEL'S BLESSING.

BY DR. NEATBY.

(At the Edinburgh Conference, June, 1894.)

IN Exodus iii. 15 the lasting blessing of God's earthly people is secured by the very name of the Lord. "The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you; this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." This is connected with the revelation of the name of Jehovah, as we see in Exodus vi. 2, 3. We know God as "Father," a priceless revelation; but the name of God in connection with the promises made to the fathers, is Jehovah. It is the eternal and unchangeable One that is before us. His is an unchangeable *name*, an unchangeable *being*, and His purposes with regard to Israel are necessarily unchangeable. "This is My name," not as long as Israel is faithful, but "*for ever*, and this is My memorial throughout all generations." How well it is for Israel that their final and full blessing depends, not upon what they are for God, but upon what Jehovah in covenant relationship is for Israel.

Just look at the promise first made to Abraham in Genesis xvii. 7, 8, "And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." It would not be possible to spiritualise this by any reasonable method. It evidently means that the land in which Abraham was a stranger, the land which we call Palestine, is given to Abraham and his seed by an everlasting covenant. In chapter xxvi. 4 the covenant is confirmed with the first seed, Isaac, the type of the "seed which is Christ." "And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." This is the covenant-promise which was made to Abraham, confirmed to Isaac. I need not refer you to the scripture in which it was confirmed to Jacob, but I will simply say that Jacob was an outcast when this covenant-promise was confirmed to him. He had tried to get the blessing by deceit, but his father's blessing was not *the* blessing, but a carnal blessing. But when he was an outcast, and lying with a stone for his pillow beneath the open heaven, then God, at the top of that blessed ladder which typifies the close connection which will exist between heaven and earth in

the millennial day, says to him, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Thus the promise was given to Abraham and Isaac, and confirmed to Jacob as an immutable covenant. That Israel has not been faithful to her God accounts for the terrible chastisements which have fallen upon that people, but can never set aside the purposes of God, or change His solemnly repeated covenant-promise. That is quite impossible. The blessings proposed in the covenant of Sinai were conditional upon the people's obedience; "Which my covenant they brake," said the Lord. But the Abrahamic was really a one-sided covenant, as is also the new covenant yet to be made with Israel. The purpose of God is as unchangeable as His great and glorious name.

Now turn with me to Romans xi. 25, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Notice carefully it is "blindness in part until . . ." It is not blindness "to all generations." That was the immutable covenant-promise—"Thy faithfulness is to all generations." But the blindness is "in part" and "until." It has a term; the limit is given. "Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." We are looking for the Lord from heaven—looking now this afternoon. We shall be right glad to see Him before the finger of that clock has gone round again. If He does come, the "fulness of the Gentiles" will have been gathered in. All will be caught up at His coming, and the blindness which, in part, has happened to Israel will pass away, and God's immutable promise, the original purpose of His heart, will be fulfilled in the blessing of Israel. "And so all Israel shall be saved." This is "all Israel" in contrast to the election of grace. If a Jew believes to-day he becomes a member of the body of Christ. As such he is neither a Jew nor a Gentile. He loses his national character. He belongs to the third class spoken of, "the Church of God." "All Israel," on the other hand, is the elect nation *as a whole*. The remnant brought through the fire becomes "the righteous nation." Here is the first *national* salvation: "So all Israel [or Israel as a whole] shall be saved, as it is written." Thank God it is written. When once this blessed formula is used about any thing, it commands our most reverent confidence. "As it is written, there shall come out of Sion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." How important in every way this is! But there is one thing specially that I have read this passage for—to show that Israel is to come in on the ground of pure mercy. Israel's blessing, while it is the eternal purpose of God, shall be brought in on the ground of mercy, and on that ground alone. Let us read a verse from the Gospel of St. John (xi. 49, 50): "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." Mark it well, it is a question not of individuals, but of the "nation." We are distinctly told (v. 51) "that Jesus should die for that *nation*." Other ends, and marvellous ones too, were served by that death. Christ died for the formation of the Church, that the children of God who were scattered

abroad might be gathered into one. This choice purpose of God could only be brought about by means of the work of Christ on the cross. But we must not forget that the first thing brought before us here is the death of Christ in relation to the nation of Israel. It was for "that nation" in a way and manner that applies to no one else. Christ's death for Israel is the righteous ground on which God is about to fulfil every good word He has spoken about Israel. His name is named upon them, His name is the guarantee that every word that has been spoken shall be fulfilled. "This is My name for ever, and this is My memorial unto all generations."

I have spoken of the original purpose of God. In Deut. xxxii. 8, 9 you will find a statement that is very important in this connection. "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance." How precious it is to hear from the lips of the living God that the people, scattered and peeled to-day, but which have been redeemed by the Saviour's blood, are the lot of His inheritance. We have nothing to do, in presence of such statements, but to bow the head and worship. Our God is the God of *all* grace. If you and I have a sense of God's grace to us, if we know anything of the unsearchable riches of Christ, if we know anything about our *oneness* with Christ now, we can look with unmixed joy at all Israel's blessings. Envy cannot live in a happy and satisfied heart! We joyfully hail all the blessing which God is going to give the people of His choice, according to His eternal purpose.

We have many a prophecy of this in Isaiah. I will refer to one of them to show that although Israel is now scattered and peeled, in accordance with the solemn threatenings of God, literally accomplished, yet God is going to accomplish His covenant-promise of blessing with the same fidelity, and to the satisfying of His heart.

In Isaiah x. 22 you will notice that the remnant of Israel is brought into blessing after the "consumption" in the midst of the land. Throughout the Prophets, judgment of the wicked invariably precedes the introduction of millennial blessing. In the 25th verse we read, "For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction." Every student of prophecy knows that "the indignation" is God's wrath because of Israel's sin, which culminates in the great tribulation. That indignation shall cease, and "mine anger in their destruction," *i.e.* in the destruction of the enemies of Israel. "The Lord of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb: and as his rod was upon the sea, so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt." This refers to complete destructions of the enemy; and Israel was fully and gloriously delivered. (See Judges vii. 25, Exodus xv.) Israel's song of victory on the wilderness side of the Red Sea testifies how completely God had delivered them. The enemies lie dead on the banks of the Red Sea, and they sing the song of Moses on its Canaan-ward shore. All this has a blessed voice for us, it is written for our instruction; but to spiritualise away its natural meaning with regard to Israel is pure unbelief.

In chapter xi. we have a most magnificent account of the millennium. All nations are at length blessed in Abraham and in his "Seed." The covenant-promise is fully and gloriously accomplished. "All Israel" is saved and placed in supremacy over a redeemed and delivered creation. Christ Himself, God's chosen one, reigns in Zion, "of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord." "He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears." Creation shall share in the blessing (Rom. viii. 19-21) to its widest border; for "the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid." Israel will be a holy nation, a kingdom of priests, and "they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

In the 13th verse details of great value are given as to Israel: "The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim." Blessed be God, their union shall be completed in their conversion. (Compare Ezek. xxxvii. 22-28.) It will be no mere "carnal" deliverance. "They shall all be taught of God." Israel *as Israel* will be saved, as it is written, "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." (Isaiah xlv. 25.) God is saving individual Jews now, not as Israel, but as sinners; just as He has called you and me as sinners. But here we have the great day of the conversion and blessing of Israel as a nation.

This prophecy closes in chapter xii. with a song that shall be sung in Jerusalem, which you, my fellow-saints, and I shall hear in the blessed abode of the Father's house. The towers of Salem will shake with the glad anthem: "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and song; He also is become my salvation." We almost feel our hearts expand with the joy of that day when at home with our blessed Saviour, realising fully the marriage of the Lamb, ourselves the bride that He died to redeem, we shall hear God's redeemed people upon the earth singing His praises as Jehovah, their Strength, their Song, their Salvation. These are not dreams, my brethren; it is the sober history of a future day told us in the word of God.

Let me just indicate one or two passages, upon which I have not time to dwell. Ezekiel xxxvi. 16-38. You will observe that this passage relates to the Israel that "dwelt in their own land" and "defiled it," whom Jehovah "scattered among the heathen." Of *that* people it is said, "I will take you from among the heathen . . . and will bring you into your own land." No principle of interpretation, human or divine, would allow us to make the scattering literal and the gathering spiritual; Israel all through the passage must be the same people.

In the following chapter, verse 22: "And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols . . . but I will save them out of all

their dwelling-places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them : so shall they be My people, and I will be their God." Here it is the *same* people who were polluted with idols that are saved from idols ; the people who were divided that are to be united, never again to be divided. The people *who sinned* are to be cleansed, and *they* are to be Jehovah's people, and He is to be their God. Shall we not take God at His word and say, "Be it to this beloved people according to Thy word"? "And David My servant shall be king over them." Christ will reign as David until He has put His enemies under His feet, and then reign in peace as Solomon, the king's son." "Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son." (Psalm lxxii. 1.) "Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them ; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them ; and I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore." Lord, hasten it ! We cannot feel jealousy when we are satisfied with Christ Jesus. Moreover, it is for the glory of the God of all grace to whom we ourselves owe everything. (Ezekiel xxxvi. 22.) Let us keep this before our hearts. We have all that divine grace can give ; all that the precious peace, made by the blood of the cross, means ; all that is associated with Christ Jesus exalted on high. We can delight in the grace that will soon bring Israel into the fullest blessing, and joyfully hail the answer to the oft-repeated prayer, "Thy kingdom come, Thy *Will* be done on earth as it is in heaven." "Even so, come, Lord Jesus !"
