

DARK PROPHECIES FULFILLED

– JEREMIAH 39. – AUGUST 27. –

"Be sure your sin will find you out." – Num. 32:23.

THE DARK PROPHECIES which the Lord sent through Jeremiah the Prophet finally reached fulfillment. The besieging army of the Chaldeans, after a year and a half of siege, finally, with battering rams, succeeded in making a breach in the wall through which an entrance was effected and the city forced to capitulate. King Zedekiah and his small army escaped toward the south, going in the direction of the Jordan, but they were soon overtaken by the Chaldeans. Nebuchadnezzar, in person, was some miles distant from Jerusalem, at Riblah, and thither Zedekiah, the royal prisoner, was taken for sentence – to be punished for having violated the contract with Nebuchadnezzar, who really placed him upon the throne.

The punishment was after the manner of the time, illustrated on some of the victory tablets which still remain. The king's eyes were put out and, a blind prisoner, he was taken to Babylon. Thus were fulfilled two very striking prophecies which, until fulfilled, seemed quite contradictory. In this we get a lesson of how carefully we should study Divine prophecy, and how faithfully we should trust its every detail if we would receive light instead of darkness.

One of these prophecies respecting Zedekiah is found in Ezekiel 12:10-13. The other is found in Jeremiah 32:3-5. Ezekiel declared that king Zedekiah would be taken to Babylon a captive, and that there he would live and there die, and yet again declared that he would never see the city, apparently a contradiction. Jeremiah predicted the downfall of Jerusalem, declaring that [R4866 : page 237] Zedekiah would speak with Nebuchadnezzar mouth to mouth and see his eyes. This seemed to contradict Ezekiel's statement, for if he would speak with the king

mouth to mouth and see him eye to eye, how would it be possible that he would not see the city of Babylon?

The fulfillment met all the requirements. King Zedekiah saw Nebuchadnezzar and spoke to him at Riblah in Palestine. His sight was there taken from him and he was taken a prisoner to Babylon. He lived and died in Babylon but saw it not.

"With repentance his only companion he lay,
And a dismal companion was he."

CRUELTIES OF THE PAST

"In the Bas Reliefs, representing the capture of Lachish by Sennacherib, the prisoners are represented, some pegged down to the ground to be flayed alive – others having their eyes put out. In one of the sculptures at Khossabad, Sargon represents himself in person holding a prisoner by a thong attached to a ring passed through his under lip. The victim kneels before him, while with a spear he pierces his eyes. Others are chained and, with hooks through their lips, are held awaiting their turn. In other cases the king slays the prisoner with his own spear. In another an executioner flays a captive chained to a wall. It was especially in Persia that the cruel practice of blinding prisoners prevailed, and it is mentioned by most Greek historians. In Turkey it was formerly the custom for a Sultan on his accession either to slaughter or blind his half brothers that he might have no rivals or dangerous ones near his throne. In modern Persia the Shahs have invariably, even up to the present century, put out the eyes of all their brothers who did not escape in time to distant provinces." – *Canon Tristran*.

Our forefathers were once savage and presumably as cruel and as heartless as those described by the Canon. Thank God for a civilization which to a large extent has lifted "Christendom" to a higher plane of civilization – to greater moderation in dealing with foes – to a greater degree of human sympathy! Thank God that the prisons of today are reformatories instead of dungeons! Thank God that we are gradually

realizing that as a race we were born in sin and shapen in iniquity! (Psa. 51:5.) The realization of this is helping to make us sympathetic to the depraved and degraded – not to the extent of approving their wrong, but to the extent of attempting to intelligently assist them to better mental views and to better self-control.

TO WHAT SHOULD THE CREDIT BE GIVEN?

To what, therefore, shall we give the credit of our progress and civilization? We cannot give the credit to any church, sect or party. We must honestly acknowledge that every sect, in its turn, has displayed more or less of bitterness, bigotry, superstition and persecution – contrary even to its own standards. In the last analysis we must admit that the great influence which has moulded the civilization of our day has come to us from the words and example of "the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." (I Tim. 2:6.) The great Truths which He uttered have come echoing down the centuries, speaking righteousness, peace and love, even for our enemies. Everywhere His "Wonderful Words of Life" have made an impression, and here and there have effected the transformation of character.

We should more and more feel our obligation to the great truths which come to us from the Bible, and less and less obligation to the sects and parties which have quarrelled and battled over those Words of Life.

Thus, gradually, we will come to discern the truth of the Bible declaration, namely, that there is but one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, and one Church of the living God, the Church of the First-Borns, whose names are written in heaven. These, found scattered in all the denominations and outside of all, constitute the saintly few who have the promise of the First Resurrection, as joint-heirs with the Messiah in His glorious Kingdom which will soon be established in the earth and enforce righteousness.

