

THE JEWISH ERA

Vol. 16.

CHICAGO, APRIL 15, 1907

No. 2

"A light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel."

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY, PRICE OF SUBSCRIPTION, 25 CENTS PER YEAR

Subscription in Europe or other foreign parts, 8 cents extra for postage

Entered as Second-Class Matter April 12, 1896, under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.

MRS. T. C. ROUNDS, EDITOR.

THE TRUE HEBREW.*

BY REV. CHAS. A. BLANCHARD, D. D.

Text. Galatians 3:6. "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

There are three men who stand out foremost among all the millions who have lived in this world from the beginning until now. These three men are Jews. We measure men by the forces which they resist and overcome, the changes which they inaugurate, the institutions which they establish. Now, Abraham, Moses and Paul, subjected to this test are easily the first three among the world's giant personalities. The great men who came after them have followed in their footsteps; those who preceded them did not attain to their height of power.

Abraham was the leader of that great host who have accepted God as the cause, the ruler and the judge of the universe. We have not time to go into the argument. We must content ourselves with a statement of the fact. It is proper, however, to say that we do not avoid mystery when we give up the doctrine of the one true and living God. An uncaused universe is a greater mystery than one caused; and a universe caused by

two or more warring deities is a greater mystery than the universe of the monotheist.

But no matter about the argument, the world has come to be monotheistic. Polytheism lingers in Africa, India and China. In each of these great areas it is questioned. It must fight for its life or die. It is fighting for its life and dying. The nations of the world most powerful in arts, in arms, in industries, in merchandising, are all believers in the God of Abraham.

In the time of Abraham, polytheism was universal. The most cultivated and powerful nations of the world accepted it as a theory of the universe for two thousand years after Abraham died. Yet this lone man separated himself from his father's house, from his neighbors and friends, from the land of his childhood, and the graves of his ancestors, on the proposition that there was one living and true God who could commune with men and keep His word to them.

You who are here tonight have in you the blood of Abraham. I have not the blood of Abraham; but I have the faith of Abraham. Intellectually and spiritually I am a child of Abraham. Let us rejoice in our descent, let us be glad in our kinship, and let us keep our minds open and free as Abraham

*Notes of an address by President Blanchard of Wheaton College, given before the Hebrew Mission of Chicago, Sabbath, March 10, 1907.

fectly governed, but the complete alphabet of the plan of the ages will not be filled out until "Christ shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." (1 Cor. 15:24).

It thus appears that the acrostic psalms occupy a very important place in the Psalter. Standing near the beginning of the collection, and at its close, they are evidently designed features in an inspired arrangement. The truths of prophecy are often taught in symbols—may we not look for symbols in the construction and arrangement, as well as in the contents, of the text itself? May not that same inspired one who in the 22d psalm wrote the thoughts of Christ upon the cross in terms of his own personal suffering, have employed the simple order of the alphabet to represent the progress and perfection of God's plans for Israel, and through Israel for the world?

THE PLAN OF RABBI LEVY.

The Rev. A. R. Levy is of the opinion that the congestion and poverty in the Ghetto of Chicago will be reduced to a minimum within twenty-five years by bringing the Jews to face opportunities awaiting them as tillers of the soil.

Dr. Levy proposes to establish an ideal farm for the training of Jewish children that they may become scientific farmers. No location has been decided upon, but it will be within fifty miles of Chicago, and at the start will have accommodations for forty boys and sixty girls.

"He hath remembered his covenant forever, the word which he commanded for a thousand generations. Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant; saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance: when they were *but* a few men in number: yea, very few, and strangers in it." Ps. 105:8-12.

IN MEMORIAM OF JOHN WILKINSON.

By REV. LOUIS MEYER.

Tuesday, February 12, 1907, at 3:50 a. m., John Wilkinson, for fifty-six years a Jewish missionary and the founder of the Mildmay Mission to the Jews in London, passed peacefully and almost without pain into the presence of the Lord whom he loved and served throughout the years of his long life.

Born at Tealby, in Lincolnshire, England, on December 6, 1824, John Wilkinson was the son of godly parents, who were "good old-fashioned Methodists," according to his own words. The boy received careful religious training, and when in 1838 the village became the scene of a great religious revival, he surrendered himself to the Lord and was truly converted. Immediately he consecrated himself to the active service of the Lord, and though employed in secular work, found constant opportunity for bringing others unto Christ. In 1845 he was made a local preacher in the Wesleyan church and soon found openings all over the country. While engaged in this work at Louth, a friend directed the mind of the young preacher, who had not yet chosen a definite sphere of work, to missionary work among the Jews, and John Wilkinson at once perceived the call of the Lord and followed it without hesitation. Thus, in 1851, he entered Blackfriars College in London, an institution under the control of the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews, and entered upon a course of linguistic, theological and metaphysical studies suited to prepare him for missionary work among the Jews. There were seven other students

in Black Friars College beside him, and the intercourse with these, but especially with the five Hebrew Christians among them, proved helpful to John Wilkinson in every respect. In August, 1854, he left the college, the last Gentile trained within it, and became a missionary of the British Society to the Jews in London, where he quickly gained access to a number of Jewish families. In 1855 he was ordained as an Independent minister of the Gospel, three Wesleyan and three Congregational ministers taking part in the service. In 1856 he was married to her, who, having proved a loving counsellor and wife through many years of happy married life, preceded him to glory a few years ago. At the same time, having been commissioned (in 1855) to visit the Jews in the provinces and to address Christians everywhere in behalf of the evangelization of the Jews, his work greatly increased. Twenty - two years John Wilkinson thus labored, preaching Christ to the Jews wherever he met them, traveling 10,000 miles a year and speaking 16 to 20 hours in public and quite as much in private every week. The Lord blessed his labors abundantly. The interest in Israel increased all over Great Britain. The Jews received the Gentile Christian missionary well, though he did not for a moment try to hide his purpose and bring them to Christ, and many a Jew found Christ through his instrumentality. Yet John Wilkinson did not feel satisfied. He wanted to preach the Gospel to the Jews exclusively and forego the instruction of Christian people in things relating to the Jews. The Committee of the British Society felt unable to grant his wish, and reluctantly John Wilkinson tendered his resignation in February, 1876, which was to take effect in May.

On June 1, 1876, the Mildmay Mission to the Jews was organized in London by John Wilkinson. It was to be interdenominational. No appeals for support were to be made, but the funds and workers should be provided in answer to prayer. At first it was linked with the work of the Mildmay Conference Hall, but was afterwards made independent. We have no space to follow the development of the Mildmay Mission through the more than thirty years of its existence. We will only state that, through the blessing of the Lord, under the wise management of John Wilkinson, it has grown until it is now one of the best equipped of all Jewish missions in London, with well-established agencies in Russia. Until the end of his long life John Wilkinson remained its director and managed its complicated affairs, assisted however by his son, Rev. S. H. Wilkinson, during the last years of his life.

John Wilkinson did not suffer long. *Trusting and Toiling*, the monthly magazine of the Mildmay Mission, in its January number still stated, "Rev. John Wilkinson remains in splendid health." On January 8th, though very weak, he gave an address to Jews and Jewesses. The next day his sons persuaded him to take to bed. Slowly his strength ebbed away, until the soul departed, on February 12th, at 3:50 a. m., to be with Christ. The memorial service was held at the Mildmay Conference Hall on February 16th and was attended by the leaders of religious work in London, while all the speakers bore testimony to the great love of the departed, love for his Lord and love for the souls of Jews and Gentiles.

In the history of Jewish missions the name of John Wilkinson will live, not so much because he was

an ardent lover of Israel, nor because he was himself a successful missionary, nor because he was the founder of a great mission to the Jews, but because he was the first to see the vital importance of the distribution of the New Testament among the Jews in the different languages in use among them. The New Testament had been translated into Hebrew before John Wilkinson became instrumental in the publication of the Ginsburg-Salkinson translation. The New Testament had been prepared in a Yiddish translation before John Wilkinson became instrumental in the publication of James Adler's translation. The missionaries of the Callenberg Institutum Judaicum in London Jews' Society and the British Society had carried many a copy of the older translation into Jewish strongholds, and many a Jew had been brought to Christ through the reading of those translations. But unto John Wilkinson God gave the clear understanding of the importance of the world-wide distribution of the New Testament among the Jews, and unto him God granted the means and the men to do the work. Thus agents of the Mildmay Mission to the Jews have undertaken long tours in almost all parts of the earth where Jews dwell, but especially in Russia, for the distribution of the New Testament, and the good thus done will not be known until the redeemed are gathered.

To the writer John Wilkinson personally proved an inspiration for Jewish work, as he has proved to others without doubt. In May, 1894, John Wilkinson, accompanied by dear James Adler, came to this country upon the urgent invitation of Dr. Niles of Boston and other friends of Israel. He held meetings in Boston, Philadelphia and

New York, and the writer, then a missionary of the Reformed Presbyterian Church to the Jews in Cincinnati, was privileged to hear all his addresses in Philadelphia and New York and to get into close personal touch with him. The hours of private intercourse were most precious and remain forgotten, and John Wilkinson has had a great influence upon the writer's life and work. We were conscious of the fact that he lived very close to his Master, and his childlike faith made a deep impression. As he recited quietly in one of the meetings at Philadelphia the wonderful way in which God had answered his prayers, our own faith was deepened and from that day on we followed his example in faith in prayer. Later on, in the work of the pastorate, we have frequently dwelt upon the strong faith of John Wilkinson and the wonderful way in which God answered his prayers and have thus been enabled to help others.

Last year we saw him again after an interval of exactly twelve years. The body had grown old and weak, the powers of memory were not as fresh, but the faith was the same. We heard him speak of the way in which the Lord was managing the affairs of the Mildmay Mission to the Jews. There was still the same strong trust and the same willing submission in the will of the Lord which we admired twelve years before. And thus our last memories of John Wilkinson are as inspiring as our first.

And now he has gone. The Mildmay Mission to the Jews seems deeply afflicted in the loss of its founder and director, and yet the Lord showed clearly years ago that He had provided a worthy successor in the son, Samuel Hinds Wilkinson. The cause of Jewish

missions has suffered a great loss, and yet it is the Lord's cause, and He provides the workers. The sons and daughters of John Wilkinson are in deep sorrow because the dearly beloved father has gone from them, and yet he has gone to be with Christ, to join the wife who preceded him to glory, and to be with the ransomed, without sin and sorrow. Many a believer, Jew and Gentile, brought to Christ through the instrumentality of John Wilkinson, grieves sorely as he hears of the departure of the beloved friend, and yet we all shall join him if we are faithful to our Lord and Master to the end.

No, let us not sorrow as those who are without hope, but let us follow on, leaning on Jesus all the way. Then shall we meet again, in glory, John Wilkinson and all our loved ones who are now asleep in Jesus!

PURIM.*

The festival of Purim as Judaism recognizes it, is a purely national festival, established as long ago as the men of the Great Synod to commemorate the deliverance of the Jews from a greater danger which threatened them in Persia under the reign of Xerxes. The secular nature of Purim, it is true, has at all times been apparent. It has never been universally regarded a religious holy day. The book of Esther does not prescribe any religious service for Purim. It enjoins only the celebration of the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar as "days of feasting and gladness, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor" (Esther 9:22). None the less, this feast has become endeared to Jewish people so that its

continuance has been promised to last until that distant age when all other festivals shall have become obsolete. Purim has become in a way the symbol of Jewish hope in their ultimate salvation.

With the minute details of the religious features of this festival, we are not concerned here. Every one knows that the Megillah, or the book of Esther, is read in the synagogues or on the eve and during the day of the fourteenth of Adar, that the reading is done in a peculiar chant different from that in which the weekly portion of the Pentateuch is recited, and that everyone, even the poorest, is obliged to present his neighbor with some gift. What is of more interest to us, is to know something about the multifarious customs associated with this feast.

In the development of the Purim customs and Purim literature we discern two distinct elements at work. The one is the great deliverance of the Jews from a great calamity which resulted in the downfall of their enemy, and the other the celebration of this event by feasting and merry-making. The story of Esther on the one hand, became a source of comfort to the Jewish people in times of oppression, because it presented to them an example of unexpected divine intervention, and on the other, it invited amplification, because it offered a good opportunity of associating its events with their bitter experience during the Diaspora.

The downfall of Haman, again, is responsible for many various customs which came into vogue at different times and in different lands. From an early time it has been customary at the feast of Purim to burn or otherwise destroy effigies of Haman. The practice was well known under the

*The Fast of Esther was celebrated Feb. 27th, the Feast of Purim, Feb. 28th.