Isaiah - Commentaries by Frederick George Patterson

Collected Writings, Isaiah 49:9-10

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Q. “G.” Does Isaiah 49:9, 10, apply to Jews or Gentiles?

A. I believe it applies to the Jews. The chapter gives you a complete history of Christ, replacing Israel on earth as Jehovah’s servant, from the womb of the Virgin to the throne of the kingdom. In verses 4, 5, the Spirit of Christ makes the lament that He had spent His strength in vain, Israel would not be gathered by her Messiah! This brought forth those touching words (Matt. 23:37), “How often would I have gathered thee,” etc., as the moment of His city’s rejection of her King drew forth those tears, which, though they came from human eyes, took their spring in the heart of God.

The answer of God comes to His plaint in the sixth and following verses. It was a light thing the gathering of Israel compared with the new and wondrous work He should accomplish — not now gathering a little nation, but shining. forth as the light to the Gentiles, to make known God’s salvation to the ends of the earth. Strictly this is Christ here, yet to show how, when Christ is spoken of in the Old Testament, the Church is seen in Him, though not revealed then; Paul uses this passage in Acts 13:47, applying it to Christ’s members, and intelligently taking as a command what he had gathered from the spirit of the word. In verse 7, He is there looked upon as a rejected Christ — despised of man, and abhorred of His own people; but kings and princes would yet worship Him, because of the faithfulness of Jehovah who would choose Him. In verses 8 and 10 He is given as a covenant to the people, that is, Israel; to bring in the earthly blessing; to set free captive Israel — “Prisoners of hope” (Zech. 9:11,12) — and open the prison doors to those who are bound. Thus the true Shepherd of Israel feeds His now gathered flock which would hunger and thirst no more. How analogous is the language of Revelation 7:16,17, which the elder in heaven uses as to those who had come out of the great tribulation, and were marked and prepared for blessing below in the millennial earth.

The prophecy of the chapter runs on to the gathering of the tribes of Israel from the north and west, and from the Land of Sinim (China), and the judgment on their oppressors.