

Henry Schmidt

Israel and the Gentiles



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Israel and the Gentiles

By Rev. Henry I. Schmidt, D.D.

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Israel And The Gentiles

By the Rev. Henry I. Schmidt, D. D., New York.

A review of and reflections on Israel and the Gentiles. Contributions to the History of the Jews, from the earliest times to the present day. By Dr. Isaac Da Costa, of Amsterdam. New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, Broadway. 1855.

HISTORY does not furnish a more striking or imposing evidence of its supreme control of human affairs, in accordance with its own will and infinitely wise purposes, than we have in the origin, rise, growth, vicissitudes, calamities and final dispersion of the Hebrew nation, the object first of prophecy and promise, next of wonderfully glorious fulfillment, afterwards of terrible denunciations, the accomplishment of which has been rolling along with the lapse of centuries; and nothing can more signally confirm the truth of sacred history and prophecy than the record of Israel's national life and death. The world does not contain a more stupendous monument of the infinite power, wisdom and righteousness of the divine government, than Israel's distinct existence among the nations of the earth since the calling and emigration of Abraham (A. M. 2083: R. C. 1921), down to the present day; a period of 3778 years. This distinctness of Israel as a peculiar people, at one time enjoying a national existence contemptible or glorious, at another in disgraceful bondage to neighboring nations: now dwelling in peace and plenty on the soil of promised Canaan, the tribes coming up annually from far and near to the temple of the city of David; then defying for years the embattled forces of imperial Rome; and at length, after seeing the temple burned, and Jerusalem laid waste, scattered to the four winds of heaven, dispersed among all the other nations that dwell on the face of the earth; and yet, always remaining essentially one, a nation separate from all others and altogether peculiar, retaining its own religion, institutions, rites, usages, language and laws: this, we say, presents a phenomenon so unique, so marvelously singular, so entirely unparalleled, that the man who, with the writ-

ings of the prophets before him, cannot here discern the finger of God, and recognize the directing and controlling power of divine Providence, must he afflicted with a degree of mental blindness and obtuseness, to which no amount of pity can bear any appreciable proportion. The national career of Israel, their many extraordinary vicissitudes, their denationalized, but continued and perfectly distinct existence, through eighteen centuries of oppressions and persecutions unequalled in the history of mankind, this phenomenon possesses all the attributes of a stupendous miracle, that sets at nought all human experience concerning the fate of nations: a miracle so striking that, while to us it is confirmation strong of the truth of divine Revelation, Our modern philosophers are under the most solemn obligation to their own avowed doctrines or principles, to disbelieve it and utterly to deny that such a being as a Jew, to say nought of the Jewish people, ever existed. Or is this one link in that chain of necessity, of necessary sequence, which, according to modern philosophers, cannot be broken? Certainly human history knows of nothing else remotely resembling it.

The first empire of which we read, with its vast, proud capital, is gone, and for some thousand years nobody knew where that capital had stood, until it was recently dug up again out of the sands of the desert. Babylon, with all of which it once was the mighty center, is gone. The empire of the Medes and Persians, with all its power and glory, is gone. Egypt can now be found only in the museums of Europe and America: it lives only in its colossal ruins, its pyramids, and its hieroglyphics which scholars have only within a few years past learned how to read and interpret. All that remains of that city, whose merchants were princes, and whose commerce compassed the world, is a few fisher-huts. Athens, the brilliant home of philosophy, letters and art; Sparta, the burly mother of a rugged race, mighty as a school for war, and in its stern patriotism, are the worn out themes of prize poems and of beard lessorators at college commencements. To Rome, once the world's proud and bloody mistress, nothing is left save the ancient metropolis itself and the circumjacent country, wretchedly misgoverned* by a silly old priest, whilst of the great empire itself, it would not even be true to say, "stat nominis umbra:" the very shadow has flitted away.

Of these nations several oppressed, some led captive, the Hebrews; the last-named destroyed their city, broke up their commonwealth, and scattered the nation to wander homeless over the face of the earth: they are gone, whilst Israel remains. It is true, the Chinese empire, and the empire of

Japan claim to be some thousands of years old; but they have been shut up within themselves, and left to themselves by others: nobody has meddled with them from without: nobody has conquered them, persecuted or sought to exile their people. The Mongol and Mandshu conquest of China cannot be taken into account here; for it left its petrified culture and political organization untouched: — both empires are nothing but mummies, embalmed by a process which preserves and perpetuates a torpid and sluggish organization. But in the midst of this ever changing world, in which empires, dynasties and nationalities are coming on the stage, playing their part, and passing away, and concerning which the law of decay and death is the only law which altereth not, the Jewish people have remained — and remained the same. Their national existence terminated, their city and temple utterly destroyed, the population driven from its beloved soil, the Hebrews have, ever since, been found a distinct and a peculiar people, scattered over the whole face of the earth, dispersed among all nations, undergoing hardships, persecutions and sufferings, which would long since have utterly exterminated any people, for whose preservation almighty power was not specially pledged and exerted. The history of such a people, even without any reference to the church of God and human salvation, would be one of profound interest. Of this history, we mean the history subsequent to the dispersion, we have a spirited and exceedingly interesting narrative in the volume before us. We design, if our space should permit, to communicate in these pages a variety of other interesting matter concerning the modern Jews; but it will be our first duty to give an account of Dr. Da Costa's admirable work, and to present copious extracts from its pages.

Since the commencement of the present century a number of works of considerable value and interest have appeared, treating of the condition, political, moral and religious, of the Jews of our day; but they refer either to particular localities inhabited by this people, or to some special affairs concerning them; and we know of no work which presents, like this, a complete history of the Hebrews, in their connections with and relations to the gentiles, from the time of Moses down to the present day. This is the design of the work before us.

“In my Lectures on Jewish History,” says the author, “which form the groundwork of this sketch, I have endeavored to notice especially the relations of my people with all the nations of the world, from the earliest days of their existence to the present time; to remark upon what the Gentiles are

for the Jews, either as means of instruction or of chastisement, and what Israel has been, and still is, for the Gentiles, either as witnesses to the truth, and victims of their own unbelief, or as the people kept apart, to impart light and salvation to the Gentiles.” — p. x. sq. Yet he disavows every pretension to his work being considered a regular history, or even an attempt at one.

“A universal history of the Jews in modern times, relating to their wanderings, and entering into the details of their manners, customs, literature and biography, on the scale of Basnage, but written in a more correct and interesting manner, with the additional light which time and science have now thrown upon the subject, is still to be desired. What is here brought forward, can only be considered as the contribution of a stone to the building; for we have but attempted a glance into the chaos of materials, though a glance happily directed may, perhaps, lead to a discovery valuable to science, or the confirmation of faith.”—p. x.

Surely there is no people on earth, whose history, whose state and prospects can possess a greater interest for Christians, than those of the Jews, the vessels by means of which the truth and worship of the true God were preserved among men; the channel through which salvation came into our world. And while, therefore, we fully agree with our author in regarding a universal history of the Jews in modern times as a desideratum, we would fain hope that he will himself be induced to undertake the vast labor of supplying it. He possesses peculiar qualifications for executing the work in a manner most acceptable and satisfactory to protestant Christendom. Himself a descendant of one of those Jewish families who, in the seventeenth century, sought refuge in the Netherlands from the persecutions of Spain and Portugal, he had, from his earliest youth, made the history of his forefathers an object of meditation and study; but it was the task of exploring the annals of Israel’s dispersion and exile, that captivated his heart and imagination. His eager search for the reason why his people continued to be a nation, after having lost all the requisites usually essential to a national existence, led, through the grace of God, to his most decided conversion to Christianity.

“More than a quarter of a century has now elapsed since the epoch which decided the fate of my whole life, and yet Israel’s history, as written in the hook of books, or found in the scattered records of their eighteen hundred years of exile, has never ceased to occupy my thoughts, and to employ

a portion of my time. While entering into the details of this wondrous history, I have discovered more and more its perfect harmony with the dispensations of God, and the declarations of his word; and the Jewish nation has been brought to my view more strikingly as an abiding testimony to the truth of the Christian religion, a living commentary upon the Scriptures, a certain pledge of the entire fulfillment of prophecy.” — p. IX.

If to these brief personal notices we add, that the author is a man of extensive and profound erudition, and that he had access to the most valuable materials belonging to his field of inquiry, it will, we think, be evident that he is a most competent witness, one most likely to present the subject in a manner gratifying and interesting to protestant Christians.

Profound, indeed, and varied is the interest of this subject. The remote antiquity of their origin, so firmly established by the testimony of tradition and history, that no candid mind for a moment questions it, alone constitutes the Hebrew nation an object of the deepest interest.

“This people is the only nation that can, with certainty, trace its origin, through one family, to a single individual.” “As children of Abraham, guardians and confessors of the law of Moses and the predictions of the prophets, they bear, by a personal mark, the testimony of their genealogy, in the ordinance of circumcision. As disciples of Moses, they have now for thirty-four centuries raised the cry, ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God,’ and every Sabbath day, even to the present time, Moses and the prophets are read in their synagogues, in the same order as when the Apostle St. James mentions the fact, eighteen hundred years ago, as already, in his time, an ancient custom.” — p. 2.

The marks and features of their oriental extraction, which, although naturalized for some thousand years in the West, remain unchanged, render them objects of interest to those among whom they dwell. This interest is enhanced by the consideration, that “they have ever been a people of sojourners,” found, even long before the fall of Jerusalem, among all the other nations of the East, and since that event, dispersed among all the dwellers upon the face of the earth; and yet, though assuming something of the character of the people among whom they dwell, preserving a principle of unity, stamping them everywhere most unmistakably as descendants of one family and one father. When to this is added, that “two powerful religions derive, though in a very different manner, their origin from the existence of this people:” that both in the gospel of truth, and the imposture of the Koran, the

fathers of Israel are recognized as the fathers of their respective faith: that in both these creeds the prophets of Israel are honored as men of God, and the city of Jerusalem as a holy city, and that, notwithstanding this high antiquity, and the possession of a history full of touching and sublime incidents, Israelite has become a term of reproach, a Jew a contemptuous epithet, both among Mohammedans and Christians: when we consider the proofs which they afford of prophecies fulfilled, and the prospects which they have before them in prophecies still to be accomplished, surely we have before us an object marvelous in its singularity, imposing in its historical relations, and absorbingly interesting in all its various aspects." What a theme for anxious contemplation to the whole world, is the people whose history spreads over four thousand out of the whole six thousand years that contain the records of the human race! while even the modern part of it can be traced back during a period of eighteen hundred years!

Were there now in existence, even a single individual who could, with certainty, trace his pedigree from one of the ancient Greek or Roman families, with what care and interest would such a circumstance be investigated, as a living remnant of antiquity! And yet Israel, the very Israel whose annals extend to the most remote periods of sacred and profane history, still remains, not as a remnant only, consisting of a few solitary individuals or families, but the whole body of the people still exists, scattered over every part of our globe." — p. 4 sq.

Let us endeavor to present as condensed a view as possible of the ample details, that fill up the animated picture set before us by our author. He is not simply the narrator of facts and events: with philosophic acumen he traces these to their sources, unfolds their connections, and points out their relations to other historic streams, and to future developments and results. In his portraiture of character, and exhibition of the separate scenes of the great historic drama which he rolls along before our eyes, he displays much poetic genius and artistic skill, while the whole performance is irradiated by that devoutly Christian spirit, which animates all his works.

Every reader of Scripture knows, that it is in Egypt that Israel, no longer only a family of which the individuals can be named in a few minutes, assumes a position of historic importance. Although it would be deeply interesting to present the views and observations of our author upon the varied influences exerted upon the Hebrew nation and the Hebrew mind by the long sojourn in Egypt, or to follow him in his narrative of the many vicissi-

tudes, sufferings and achievements of the Jews, down to the destruction of Jerusalem, and in his brief, but spirited account of the remarkable destinies of the Holy City, since the Roman conquest, especially under the Crusaders, and down to our day, we must pass all this by, and proceed at once to his second book, in which he first examines the Talmuds, the Masorah and Cabbala, and then recounts the history of the Jews in the Eastern Roman empire.

Notwithstanding the entire destruction of Jerusalem, and the complete dispersion of its inhabitants, the Jewish people, though now without metropolis, without temple, without country, yet continued a nation. And the first point to be noted here, is, the means employed by the providence of God, to effect the national preservation of Israel, down to the present time.

A most important influence was here exerted by their strict observance of the ceremonial law, and especially of the rite of circumcision.

“As disciples of Moses, and children of the prophets and sacred writers, they at all times and in all places carried with them their Scriptures in the original language; handing them down from generation to generation. They tried to make amends to themselves for the loss of their city and temple in various ways, and manifested afresh their remarkable perseverance of character and ingenuity of mind, by the measures they took to form a completely new center of nationality.” — p. 112 sq.

“Directly after the triumph of Titus, the great council of the Israelitish Rabbins was established at Tiberias in Galilee. The school of scribes, instituted in that city, soon took the place of that Temple, whose restoration has never ceased to be the object of their hopes and prayers.” Here was produced “the Mishna, and eventually the Talmud; the so called Oral Law reduced to writing, arranged, commented upon and explained; which became, in the course of a four centuries, a complete Digest, or Encyclopedia of the law, the religion and the nationality of the Jews.”

It would be deeply interesting to present here the views which our author, himself once a Jew, but writing entirely as an enlightened and devout Christian, expresses respecting the Mishna and Gemara, and the judgment which he pronounces upon the monuments of Israel’s blindness and hardness of heart; but, as we have a vast field to traverse, we must hasten onward.

With the Talmud, the Masorah and the Cabbala, a triple panoply of tradition, the sons of Israel entered upon the many centuries of their dispersion,

and, by its means, preserved their nationality through the time of their deepest humiliation and misery.

“The dispersed Jews, even before the fall of Jerusalem, had classed themselves under three designations. The Rabbins understand by the”*“Captivity of the East,”* the remains of the ten tribes; by that *“of Egypt,”* the Jews under the dominion of the Ptolemies, particularly those of Alexandria; by that *“of the West,”* the Jews dispersed over every part of the Roman empire.” — p. 119. We regard here only a twofold division into Eastern and Western.

“Both in the East and West, but especially in Europe, their history records little else than a continuation of misery, humiliation and degeneracy.” Yet we must not imagine that the Jews fell at once into this condition. History shows us that the judgment of God upon great cities, condemned on account of their sins, advances upon them slowly and by degrees, till the time of its complete accomplishment. It has been the same with the prophecies against rebellious and unbelieving Israel. Because of their sins, (as they themselves confess at great length in their daily prayers, only omitting the greatest of all sins — their rejection of the Savior) judgment has come upon them gradually, waxing stronger and stronger, and fulfilling more and more exactly to the letter, the prophecies of the Lord.” — p. 119 sq.

In the Roman empire, down to the time of Constantine, the Jews were, in general, honored and distinguished, rather than despised or oppressed. Even when the Christians were suffering under bloody edicts, the Jews enjoyed favors and privileges. But with the conversion of Rome’s emperor to Christianity, a complete reverse came over the condition of the Jews. They now became a condemned and persecuted sect; and as the first period of their humiliation begins at this epoch, we find them henceforward visibly sinking into a state of continually progressive oppression and misery. The gleam of hope which shone upon them in the days of Julian the Apostate, was now quenched, and under his Christian successors their condition grew worse and worse. Both in the Eastern and in the Western empire, emperors and bishops visited them with disabilities, oppressions and persecutions. These became so severe under the government of the emperor Justin, and the Code of Justinian, that during the reign of the latter, many rebellions broke out among his Jewish subjects — the dying throes of their national existence; and already in 530, a false Messiah, named Julianus, arose, who was beheaded a year or two after, and his followers dispersed. After a number of

other fearful commotions, the Jews were, during and after the reign of Justinian, reduced, in the Greek empire, to a condition in which even the last vestige of political importance was lost. In the far East the Jews continued to enjoy a degree of comparative prosperity, until the triumph of the Koran swept all before it; and in the eleventh century the dignity of Resh-Glutha, which is the proper title of the Patriarch of Babylon, ceased entirely. In Parthia, in Persia, and in the Arabian peninsula, peculiar circumstances and affinities had obtained for the Hebrews many favors and privileges, and in Arabia, even Mohammed smiled for awhile upon them; but as soon as they declared against him, they became the especial objects of his hatred. He called them very hard names, and treated them with great severity. Although after his time the Mussulmans did not again actually persecute the Jews, they have ever since maintained a hostile attitude toward each other.

“Popular hatred and contempt has ever been the portion of Israel under the crescent, as well as the cross: as in Christian Europe, so in Mohammedan Asia and Africa, the Jew was compelled to bear a distinctive mark in his garments — here the yellow hat, there the black turban.” — p. 138

Yet it is well known that Mohammed and Saracen Mussulmans, as well as Arabians, esteemed it a high honor to be descended from Abraham, and that the followers of Mohammed regarded the Jewish prophets, including Issah (i. e. Jesus) as holy men, Jerusalem as a holy city, Sinai as a holy mountain, and that "they look upon the valley of Jehoshaphat as the spot where Jesus, the Judge of the nations, with Mohammed at his side, will judge the world, seated upon a stone, which the Mohammedan points out to the traveler.

But a still closer connection with the Talmud and the Jewish traditions, has been of late found to exist in the Koran. It has long been a matter of difficulty to reconcile the undoubted marks of a biblical influence in the composition of the Koran, with its author's palpable ignorance of the real contents of the Bible. The kind of half-knowledge it manifests, both of men and facts in the Old Testament, and of our Savior's life in the New, has been attributed to a supposed intimacy of Mohammed with the historians. New light, however, has been thrown upon the subject, since attention has been drawn to a person who is entitled to a distinguished place in the biography of the founder of Islamism. Warakha Ibn Naufal was nearly related to Kadisha, the first wife of Mohammed. — An Ishmaelite by birth, but dis-

gusted with the idolatry of his nation and contemporaries, he sought for a purer faith, — first in the bosom of pharisaical Judaism, and later, in the deeply degenerate Christianity of the East.

At last he attached himself to Mohammed, and soon obtained considerable influence over the Prophet of Mecca and his doctrines. It is more than probable, that by Warakha Ibn Naufal's acquaintance with the holy writings of both the Jews and Christians, and also with the Rabbinical traditions, many circumstances were brought to the knowledge of Mohammed, which subsequently found their way, with more or less adulteration, into the Koran. At least the Biblical legends of this singular book, are also to be met with in the Talmud and other ancient writings of the Jews. The Koran may be looked upon, in some respects, as a kind of 'military Mishna.'" — p. 138 sq.

The following pages communicate much interesting information relative to the Jews who have, since the dispersion, been met with beyond the boundaries of either the old Roman or the Byzantine Empire, both in the most remote parts of the interior of Asia, and upon the coast of Malabar. They have room to notice only the Jewish population, which has long existed in the far-distant regions of China. This colony was first discovered by the Jesuits, in 1642, who met the Jews at Pekin. The careful research of French Savans, particularly of the Orientalist, De Sacy, have led to the following conclusions respecting these Chinese Jews.

"Between the time of Ezra and the destruction of the second Temple, Jews from Persia emigrated to China, and established themselves in five of the principal cities of that vast empire. This is confirmed by the fact, that the Chinese Jews are well acquainted with Ezra, whom they regard with almost as much veneration as Moses, while they appear to be quite ignorant of the pharisaical traditions of the Talmud. Their Persian origin (probably by way of Chorazan and Samarcand) is attested by the mixture of Persian words in their language. — The whole population of the Chinese Jews sprang from seven tribes, or families, whose names... seem to be derived from those of the different emperors under whom, at successive periods, those families established themselves in China. To the first of these emigrations we certainly cannot assign a later date than the early part of the second century before the birth of Christ." — p. 144. "They do not pronounce the name of Jehovah, but substitute that of the Lord. They have no knowledge whatever of the name or history of our Savior." — p. 145.

In the Western empire, the condition of the Jews was exceedingly deplorable, after the conversion of the Roman emperors to Christianity. The Merovingian line treated them with extreme rigor, and inflicted upon them the most galling disabilities. But “under the dynasty of the Carolingians in France, we find the Jews of the eighth and ninth centuries enjoying so great a degree of prosperity, that the Romish bishops took alarm, and thought it necessary to enter a protest.” The privileges granted them by Pepin le Bref were greatly multiplied and extended by his illustrious son, Charlemagne, whose enlightened policy exhibited, notwithstanding his zealous devotion to Catholicism, the essential elements of protestantism. His son and successor, Louis le Debonnaire, although narrow-minded and bigoted, continued to treat the Jews with benevolence, and conferred upon them numerous and most important privileges. But a sad change was at hand.

“The position of the Jews underwent an entire change at the downfall of the Carolingian dynasty, which began to decay after the death of Louis le Debonnaire. The invasion of the Normans, who, in the latter years of the reign of Charlemagne, began to overrun Europe, was partly the cause, and partly the signal, for a complete change of the whole state of things in that quarter of the world. The whole surface of affairs in Germany and France, and to a certain extent in Italy and England also, was, (if we may so express it) completely flooded, and its aspect from that time entirely changed. An age of barbarism spread over the whole face of Christianity, [Christendom?] during which the power of kings, the commercial prosperity of nations, their internal and external means of communication, and, in a word, all general peace and order were involved in one common ruin. During this age of almost revolutionary anarchy, the feudal system developed itself. This striking characteristic of the middle ages, the sole remedy for so many existing evils, became so firmly established, that its remains still exist, and continue, though with a decreasing power, to exert their influence over the institutions of the present time. To the Jews, this-new system was in every way injurious. With the growth of the feudal system in Europe, the rise of the Capetian dynasty in France, and the establishment of the Duke of Normandy on the throne of England, commenced a period of seven centuries, the time of the most cruel oppression and deepest debasement which that unhappy nation ever underwent.” — p. 154 sqq.

We cannot pretend to give even a sketch of the animated and deeply interesting narrative which here follows in our author’s work. The persecu-

tions and grinding oppression which the Jews were made to suffer during this long and dismal period, necessarily tended to degrade their moral character, which is here fully analyzed, and minutely portrayed. — The Normans were constitutionally and on principle, the enemies and oppressors of the Jews; but while they were distinguished for the exquisitely refined cruelties which they practiced upon them, this unhappy people fared little better in other European countries not under the sway of the Normans. Many of these oppressions and cruelties were, undoubtedly, practiced in direct violation of existing laws, which, however, were of little avail to the Jew, in the state of public opinion and feeling that prevailed in those ages. And, indeed, “the laws themselves were but little more lenient to the Jew. They excluded him from every dignity which might raise his position, and from every employment which might ameliorate it. The Jews were debarred by law from holding landed property, from exercising any civil or military office, and even from the right of citizenship; while many humiliating obligations were imposed upon them. They were shut up within the narrow bounds of a peculiar quarter, often, as in many towns of Italy, and Rome in particular, locked up at night like cattle in a yard. Open marks of degradation were imposed upon them, such as yellow clothes, peaked hats, and the like. In Bohemia, there was an edict issued, prescribing a peculiar manner of hanging the Jews, in order that a distinction might be made between their body and that of the Christian criminal, who might share the same fate.” — p. 167 sq.

Admitting that the Jews incurred this lamentable fate, in consequence of their own national sins, and of their obstinate rejection of the Savior and his gospel, this by no means justifies those who visited them with treatment, which was no more in accordance with the spirit of Christianity, than it was calculated to win them from their pertinacious adherence to their errors to the reception of the truth and the profession of the gospel. But, whatever secular causes and human agencies may have combinedly operated in the production of these results, nothing is more certain than that these results themselves were foreseen and distinctly foretold twenty-five centuries before, by the great Hebrew prophet and historian, Moses, in that remarkable passage in the book of Deuteronomy (28:29), here cited by our author:

“And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have

rest; but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind; and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life; in the morning thou shalt say, would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.” (Deut. 28:64-67.)

Whoever reads any full account of the Jews during the middle ages, or any accurate description of their condition on the European continent in more recent times, cannot fail to be struck with the fact, that they were nowhere recognized as citizens, nowhere regarded as constituting a component part of the body politic: they were looked upon as interlopers, barely to be tolerated, and expected to be thankful for the minimum of the most shabby toleration that could be accorded to them: viewed thus, as intruders, they were treated like some foreign substance that has got into the human body, having no vital connection with its organism, and to be endured or ejected, according to circumstances; according to the caprice of the person into whose system it had intruded, or the degree of inconvenience or trouble of which it might be supposed to be the cause.

Our author, having given a general view of this period, and added a variety of instructive and profitable reflections, proceeds to particulars, and relates what befell the Jews in the several principal states of Christian Europe. This copious and deeply interesting narrative, in which we have not space to follow the eloquent historian, we commend to the particular attention of our readers. It contains not only history, but special accounts of prominent families, and most interesting particulars concerning eminent men, distinguished either for learning or other important merits.

In Spain and Portugal the Jews passed through the most striking reverses, enjoying at one time the highest honors, at another subjected indiscriminately to the most virulent and ferocious persecutions, especially at the hands of that ruthless monster, the Inquisition: here flourished their most eminent scholars, among whom was the celebrated Maimonides, of whom a very full account is given: here they most successfully cultivated the sciences, and even distinguished themselves in polite literature; and from here other parts of Europe, besides Africa, received them in great numbers, when the Inquisition, under the savage administration of Torquemada, expelled them from Spain. We quote here the following appropriate observations of our author, in connection with this matter:

"In the year 1570 the doctrines of the Reformation appear to have been completely crushed in Spain, and the persecutions of the Inquisition again turned against the concealed Jews or Mohammedans. This tribunal exerted itself with less success, and apparently with far less zeal, to eradicate infidelity and the teachings of the French philosophers, than it had used in its efforts to crush the protestant faith. And how could it be otherwise? when superstition and infidelity, whether they allow it or not, are so closely allied! The Sadducees and Pharisees agreed to crucify our Savior, and to persecute his witnesses and disciples. A warning of deep moment in these our days!

The short-sighted hatred of the Inquisition had rather converted the Judaism of Spain into a festering wound in the body of the nation, than effectually combated or uprooted it. The unity thus obtained was only in externals, while in secret the Jewish religion was propagated with a system of dissimulation which could not but exercise a most pernicious influence on character, and become the source of most revolting blasphemies against God and our Lord Jesus Christ. Unanimous testimony is borne, both by Jewish and Spanish writers, to the fact, that there is scarcely a family of note in Spain or Portugal, which is not descended, either in the male or female line, from Jews who had embraced Christianity by conviction or from other motives.

Is it, then, surprising that the religion their fathers had professed for so many ages, should possess great attractions for their descendants, while placed in the midst of a church whose idolatry and saint-worship the Israelites was as much justified in condemning, as he was wrong in rejecting the suffering Savior, who had been foretold by his own prophets? — When, in addition to this, there sprung from the midst of the Papacy, and flourished in Spain, a sect whose doctrines inculcated ‘mental reserve,’ ‘simulation,’ and ‘hypocrisy,’ in matters of religion, is it wonderful that the Jews of Spain should also have had recourse to rabbinical subtleties to reconcile an outward profession of Christianity with an inward love and secret performance of the Mosaic worship? Hence arose the fearful evils which are said yet to exist in Spain, posts of dignity in the church, the priesthood, and the cloister occupied by men who in heart are Jews, and who meet at stated seasons to mourn over and abjure their outward profession of the Romish faith, and to curse, with fearful imprecations, the memory of Ferdinand and Isabella. No! it is ‘not by might nor by power’ that Israel’s conversion will be brought

about, 'but by my Spirit, saith the Lord,' the God of Israel, his Redeemer.'" — p. 862 sqq.

Yes: Israel has indeed been most persistently obstinate in refusing to acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah, and in rejecting the covenant of grace set forth and offered to a perishing world, in the gospel. From the history before us, and from the better and more encouraging experiences of more recent days, we are to learn, that nominal Christendom is doubtless, to a very great extent — to what extent, it would be most appalling to estimate — accountable for Israel's obstinate continuance in their bondage to error and superstition. The sword, the rack, the faggot, and a thousand other means of torture and death, are sad and worse than useless instrumentalities for the conviction of the mind, and the conversion of the soul.

Had Christian governments and those who professed to be ministers of Christ, ever since Constantine's profession of Christianity, approached the Jews in the same spirit and manner in which Christ himself and his apostles labored for their conversion, who may venture to say what might, have been the glorious result, not only among the Jews themselves, but through them, among other people? Since Christian nations have changed their treatment of the Jews, a great change has taken place among them as respects their views of Christianity, and great numbers have embraced, and continue to embrace the gospel; and, although the policy so long pursued toward them has served to raise their prejudices and superstition to a state of almost inflexible inveteracy, yet we see, in this country and elsewhere, that the total change in their external circumstances and their relations to Christian communities and governments, has effected a marvelous change in their views and feelings relative to the Christian faith and church. When we consider that they either have obtained, as here, or are obtaining, as in Europe, equal rights and privileges with their Christian fellow-citizens; nay, when we regard the prominence which they have attained, of late, in many European countries, in the most important relations, pursuits and interests of the state, may we not hope that, under God's blessing, the enlightened and Christian policy thus pursued toward them, will, as it has already measurably done, more and more draw them out of the strongholds and away from the entrenchments of their superannuated and effete faith, to the green pastures and still waters of divine grace in the gospel, and from the bondage of their superstition to the glorious liberty of the children of God?

Our author's history of the Jews in Spain and Portugal, is a narrative of profound, often most painfully thrilling interest: scarcely less interesting is the account of their experiences and fates in the countries to which, when expelled from the peninsula, they fled, or which their brethren had inhabited for centuries. The author's account of "The Jews and the Reformation:" of Sabbathai Sevi, their false Messiah in the East: of the Jews in Italy, Hungary, Russia and Poland; of the Sabbathism derived from the false Messiah before mentioned: of a number of Jews, who have, of late years, acquired high distinction in Germany and elsewhere, and of other kindred subjects, will be found replete with most important and valuable information. The dimensions to which this article has grown make it necessary that we should defer the communication promised at the beginning, of a variety of matters connected with the modern history of the Jews, to some future day. Meanwhile we again commend to our readers the valuable work before us: it is rich in varied and most interesting instruction: the production of a masterpiece, it is written in a most attractive and fascinating style, tolerably well rendered in the English translation: none can rise from its perusal without deriving from it the most substantial profit and profound delight.

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How Can You Find Peace With God?

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Read your Bible steadily. God works His power in human beings through His Word. Where the Word is, God the Holy Spirit is always present.

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Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 1:24-25)

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