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**THOUGHTS ON THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE CONDITION  
OF THE JEWS.**

The providence of God unfolds its ample pages for our instruction. Written with the pen of infinite wisdom, it is replete with the richest discoveries of divine truth, and will amply repay the time and pains that may be bestowed on the study of its contents. But while the meanest understanding may find many passages in it level to its comprehension, the loftiest intellect will meet with some so inexplicably mysterious, as to defy the deepest investigation. "Thy way," exclaims the pious king of Israel, addressing his God, "thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known."

In the history of the Jewish people we find one dispensation of Divine Providence awfully mysterious. In looking at it we shall see light mingled with darkness, mercy and judgment wonderfully combined. If we contemplate it with a temper like that of Paul's, it will be a subject of profitable meditation; and, with feelings of deep humility and adoring reverence, we shall exclaim, as he did, while meditating on this very subject, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

How highly were the people of Israel formerly distinguished! By what a train of miracles were they delivered from bondage, and sustained in the wilderness! Egypt is desolated by judgments; the Red sea opens a way for them; manna descends from heaven to feed them; and water, gushing from the flinty rock, follows them in all their wanderings in the wilder-

ness. Jehovah, with pomp and majesty becoming the occasion, comes down upon Mount Sinai, to proclaim his law; and with infinite condescension enters into covenant with his chosen tribes. Having established them in quiet possession of the promised land, with what care and kindness did he watch over the interest of that singular people! Although he chastised them for their rebellions, yet he protected them against the power of surrounding nations. While all other people were sitting in darkness, they were blest with the light of heaven. They alone were favoured with the instructions of prophets divinely inspired; they alone enjoyed a worship divinely instituted. They alone were made the depository of the oracles of God: to them alone "pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose were the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all God blessed for ever." Thus highly were they distinguished by the sovereign mercy of Jehovah.

But how fallen through unbelief! Jerusalem, the glory of their land, has for ages been lying in ruins; the Temple, to which their tribes repaired to worship the God of their fathers, has been demolished, and razed to its foundations. No victims bleed upon its altar; no incense rises before its mercy-seat. Dispersed over the face of the world, they are without a priest, and without an ephod. Their whole polity, civil and ecclesiastical, has been overturned. Deprived of their king and their government, they have been subject to the dominion of other nations; and wherever they have wandered, they have for ages been hated by all men, and oppressed by almost every government. Extortion, persecution, and scorn, have embittered their lives. Jehovah has pursued them with his judgments, and deprived them of all the marks of his chosen. The language of his providence is, "Ye are not my people." The veil of unbelief rests upon their minds, so that they cannot understand the writings of their own prophets. Surrounded by the light of divine revelation, they are groping in darkness. They are looking for the coming of their promised Messiah, who long ago appeared, at the time predicted; but they knew him not, and crucified him as an impostor.

How shall we account for the present calamitous condition of this once favoured people? Why has God punished them with such great and long continued severity? For their sins. But for what sins? Idolatry is doubtless a crime of signal turpitude. This in the Jews was a plain violation of their national covenant; and for this offence above all others did the anger of Jehovah often smoke against them. For this offence they were doomed to spend seventy years in captivity. But that period

soon elapsed; and subsequently to their restoration to their own land, at the expiration of that term of punishment, they have been free from the guilt of that great transgression. For what sin then has the Almighty visited this people with such continued and multiplied marks of his great displeasure? They themselves proclaimed it, when before Pilate's bar they cried out, "His blood be on us and on our children." Here is that dreadful crime that has brought on them such desolating judgments, and kept alive the fire of that furnace in which for ages they have been consuming. The blood of the despised, rejected, murdered Son of God has called for vengeance on their devoted heads, and made them a hissing and a scorn to every nation. The prediction of their great prophet and lawgiver has been fulfilled: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me: unto him shall ye hearken. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." Deut. xviii. Or, in the language of Peter, "It shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." Acts iii. 23. The Jews refused to hear this great Prophet; and, as a punishment of their unbelief, they were ejected from the church; or in the language of our Lord, "The kingdom of God was taken from them, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

But will God cast off this people, the seed of Abraham his friend, forever? Are they doomed to a perpetual excision from his visible church, and forever to be deprived of the rich inheritance of their father? No; blessed be Jehovah, he has designs of mercy towards this unhappy people: for we are assured by the apostle, that although "as concerning the gospel they are enemies for the sake" of the Gentiles; yet "as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes." Rom. xi. 28. Indeed, in the very condition of the Jews, we may discover intimations of merciful designs on the part of Divine Providence. What a singular phenomenon have they been in the moral world! Scattered as they have been over all the earth, they still exist every where as a distinct people. They have lost indeed the distinction constituted by different tribes; but they have not lost their pedigree; they can still trace their descent from Abraham. They have mingled with people of every clime and of the most diversified habits, and yet they retain their own peculiar customs and manners, that distinguish them from the rest of mankind. To destroy this distinctive character, the fires of persecution have been kindled, and the sword of despotism drawn; but in vain. Many have perished, and not a few dissembled to save their property and lives. Yet, in every part of

the world, we find Jews, who glory in their descent from the illustrious patriarch. History furnishes no parallel to this astonishing phenomenon. All conquered nations, placed in similar circumstances, have, in the course of a few centuries, lost their distinctive character, and become blended and confounded with their conquerors. But the Jews, in spite of the most oppressive and cruel measures to subvert their faith and customs, have retained both, and every where appear to this day a distinct people.

Is not the hand of Jehovah visible in this phenomenon in the moral world? What but the secret, powerful influence of his wonder-working providence could have prevented this people from being lost ages ago in the general mass of mankind? This signal interposition corresponds with his former dispensations toward them; and it clearly indicates that he has some grand and marvellous purpose to accomplish in regard to them in future times.

What Jehovah designs to do for this people, the scriptures have told us. He intends to bring them again into his visible church, and reinstate them in the enjoyment of their long forfeited privileges, by converting them to the Christian faith; an event that will furnish an illustrious close to the astonishing dispensations of Divine Providence towards this wonderful people. The language of prophecy is explicit on this subject. "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. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." Rom. xi. 25—27, 29—32.

It is the opinion too of able expositors of scripture prophecy, that the Jews will be again put in possession of their own land, where they will live as a distinct nation. The passages adduced from the writings of the prophets in support of this opinion appear so conclusive, that it would be difficult to put on them an interpretation that would not warrant an expectation of the return of this people to the land of their forefathers.

The Jews have been singularly obstinate in their unbelief. But to object this, or any other difficulty, against the certain accomplishment of scripture predictions concerning them, were

futile; because the omnipotence of Jehovah is pledged to bring these events to pass. Nothing is too hard for him to effect. Before him mountains sink to plains, and valleys rise. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness," can shine into their hearts "to give the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ." It will be as easy for him to convert the unbelieving Jews, as it was to subdue the rebellious and idolatrous Gentiles. At the death of Christ, he rent the veil of the Temple, and exposed to view its hidden mysteries; and, in the appointed time, he will rend the veil that now covers their hearts, and excludes the light of the glorious gospel.

How desirable this great event! What a jubilee will it be in the Christian church! Such an illustrious fulfilment of scripture prophecy will confound the enemies of our holy religion, and implant conviction of its truth in the breasts of the stoutest infidels. Jewish preachers in abundance will rise up, and among them many Pauls and Apollos, to carry the gospel of Christ around the globe, and proclaim to an astonished world the wonderful works of God for them. That great effects will result from the general conversion of this people, is obvious; for the accomplishment of this great event will require a more copious and extensive outpouring of the Holy Spirit than has ever yet been granted to the Christian church; and in this abundant effusion of divine influence, Gentile nations will doubtless participate; so that the work of regenerating grace will be carried on among them with greater power, and to a greater extent, than in any preceding period. Such glorious anticipations are warranted by the language of prophecy. "Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness? For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" Rom. xi. 12, 15.

But when shall this most interesting event arrive? We pretend not to give a definite answer to this question; we only state it as our opinion, that it cannot be very distant. Indeed, recent occurrences seem to indicate that it is drawing nigh. Many Christians who have turned their attention to the study of prophecy, think the accomplishment of God's designs in respect to his ancient people is approaching. A spirit of compassion for them is beginning to influence more extensively the Christian church; societies are forming for the purpose of effecting their conversion; a spirit of inquiry on the subject of the claims of our Lord, as their promised Messiah, is growing among them; and some conversions to the Christian faith have recently occurred, flattering to the hopes of the pious and benevolent.

These are all favourable indications, and ought to inspire our hearts with believing anticipations of the full accomplishment of all the prophecies relative to this extraordinary people.

Providence plainly invites our prayers in behalf of the wandering descendants of Abraham; that the lost sheep of the house of Israel may again be brought into the fold of the great Shepherd, to enjoy the rich pastures he has provided for his flock, and live in safety and happiness under his ever watchful protection. They demand our Christian compassion. Hitherto they have been treated most unkindly and unjustly. They have indeed been obstinate in unbelief; and pursued by the righteous judgments of Heaven; but from neither of these facts can any justification be derived in favour of the contempt and scorn, oppression and cruelty, inhumanity and persecution, they have so often experienced from Christian nations. It is time to redeem the Christian name from this foul stain. It is time for Christians to remember, that they were once the peculiar people of God, and that they are destined to become members of the Christian church. Who will not rejoice in prospect of that blessed day when Jew and Gentile shall be united in the family of Jesus Christ, and live as co-heirs of the same immortal glory? Let us then pray for the coming of that blessed day. Let us pray that the veil of unbelief may be taken from their hearts. Let us pray that the Deliverer may come out of Zion, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob. Let us pray that the day of millennial glory may soon break upon the world, when Jews and Gentiles shall, over all the earth, shout the praises of the great Redeemer.

J. J. J.

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#### LECTURES ON BIBLICAL HISTORY.

##### NO. VI.

“And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou, and all thy house, into the ark: for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female; and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female. Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights: and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth. And Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him. And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth.”—GEN. vii. 1—6.

That portion of biblical history which is to form the basis of the ensuing lecture, gives us an account of the *Deluge*, the most awful indication of God's abhorrence of sin that ever was exhibited on this globe. According to the most generally received chronology, this tremendous catastrophe took place one thou-