

THE
RESTORATION
OF THE
JEWS.

AN
EXTRACT
FROM
HERMAN WITSIUS.

By GEORGE WHITE.

And so all Israel shall be saved. PAUL.
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. ii. 15.

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PREFACE.

I OBSERVED a lively exhortation to prayer, for the Jews, in the Evangelical Magazine for January, which led me to enquire into the best means to promote a spirit of prayer on their behalf.

I found, upon searching into the Prophecies relating to the Restoration of Israel, my heart drawn out in prayer for them.

My printing this Extract is intended to promote a serious concern in true Christians for the conversion of God's ancient people.

The only apology I shall make is, that my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

Your willing servant

In the Gospel.

G. WHITE.

Folkstone, Jan. 24, 1806.

THE RESTORATION

OF THE

J E W S.

WE may reckon among the benefits of the New Testament the restoration of the Israelites, who were formerly rejected, and the bringing them back to the communion of God in CHRIST. Paul has unfolded this mystery to the Gentiles, *Rom.* ii. 25—27. "For 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."

On this place observe, First, That the apostle here explains some mystery; that is, a secret thing, not known but by revelation, and taken notice of but by few, and happening beyond the expectation and judgment of reason; in fine, the whole method and manner of executing which, lies in a great

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measure

measure concealed. See *1 Cor.* ii. 7, and *1 Cor.* xv. 51, and *Eph.* iii. 3.

Secondly, That it is the interest of the Gentiles to be acquainted with this mystery, to prevent their entertaining higher thoughts concerning themselves, and lower concerning the Israelites: we are, therefore, to take care, to enquire diligently, and with attention, into what the prophets have foretold concerning this matter.

Thirdly, The apostle here speaks of the people of Israel, not figuratively, but properly so called; who were at this time blind, obdurate, stupid, and hardened, of which, v. 7, Isaiah foretold this judgment of God against Israel at large, chap. vi. 9, 10, *Acts* xxviii. 26, *Isaiah* xxix. 10, 11. To this also seems applicable, that whirlwind of the Lord, that fury and continuing whirlwind, which shall abide on the head of the wicked; of which, *Jer.* xxx. 23. In short, this is that forlorn condition of the blinded nation of Jews, which, taking its rise in the apostles' time, continues to this our day.

Fourthly, That this blindness is *in part* happened to Israel. The whole nation, from its first origin, even to the end of the world, is considered as one whole; a certain part of which are those, who either have or now do, or hereafter shall live in the days of the wrath and indignation of God: *blindness has seized that part only.*

Fifthly,

Fifthly, That blindness is to continue upon them no longer, *than till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in*; that is, till the Gospel is preached among all nations of the world, whatever, which, indeed, began to be done by the apostles and their fellow-labourers; but could not be done perfectly, both on account of the extent of the world and the shortness of human life, and likewise because many nations (as all the American) were at that time unknown. This, therefore, still remains to be done successively; God, in his admirable providence, paving the way for his word. The offer of grace was first made to the Israelites. When they refused, it was sent to the Gentiles; but when the fulness of them shall be brought in, it will be again given to the Israelites, *that the last may be first, and the first last.* *Luke xiii. 30; see Luke xxi. 24.*

Sixthly, That when the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in, *all Israel shall be saved*: that is, as our Dutch commentators well observe, not a few, but a very great number, and in a manner the whole Jewish nation, in a full body. Peter Martyr has judiciously explained the fulness of the Gentiles, and the whole body of Israel, in the following words: "But we are to understand, a limited fulness, and a fixed and determined collection: which is therefore called fulness, because there will be an exact and a very
great

great number of believers, so that the church shall be publicly owned, and had in great esteem among the Gentiles, just as all Israel is to be taken for a great number of Jews, among whom CHRIST should be publicly acknowledged; not that some, as well of the Gentiles as Jews, shall not be lost."

From what we have said before, it appears, that they depart from the apostle's meaning, who, by *all Israel*, understand the *mystical Israel*, or the people of God, consisting both of Jews and Gentiles, without admitting the conversion of the whole Jewish nation to CHRIST, in the sense we have mentioned. Notwithstanding, this may be confirmed by the following arguments:

First, The apostle speaks of that Israel, to whom he ascribes his own pedigree, v. 1, whom he calls his flesh, that is, his kindred, v. 14, and the natural branches, v. 21; whom he constantly distinguishes from the Gentiles, to whom, he testifies, blindness is happened. All this is applicable to Israel, properly so called.

Secondly, He lays before us a mystery; but it was no mystery, that a very few Jews were converted to CHRIST, together with the Gentiles; for we have daily instances of that.

Thirdly, He reminds the Gentiles, not to exult over, or despise the Jews, from this argument, that, as they themselves were now
taken

taken in among the people of God, so; in like manner, the Jews were in due time to be taken in again. But if the apostle meant, that the body of the Jewish nation was to continue in their hardness, and but a few of them to be saved, who, joined to the Gentiles, should form a mystical Israel, the whole of that discourse would be more adapted to the commendation of the Gentiles than of the Israelites, and encourage, rather than repress, the pride of the Gentiles.

Fourthly, As the fall and diminishing of Israel, v. 12, and their casting away, v. 15, are to be understood; so likewise the receiving and saving them: for here the rules of a just opposition must be observed. But the fall, diminishing, and casting away of Israel, are to be understood of the generality of the Jewish nation; therefore, the receiving and saving of Israel in like manner.

From which it is evident, that Grotius trifles when he is positive, that this prophecy was fulfilled at that time when the idols and military ensigns of the Romans were openly seen in the temple; because, that then many, who had embraced Christianity, together with those who had been Christians before, were exempted from the following calamities. To which was added the conversion of many Jews, upon the

destruction of the city and temple; since now the truth of CHRIST'S predictions appeared in a much clearer light, and the galling yoke of personal bondage had broken the obstinacy of many, as Vespasian and Titus put no bar in the way: for proving this, he quotes a passage from Justin adversus Tryphonem. But such absurd imaginations are contrary to the light of all history. For, during the siege, the whole of the Jewish nation, which was all over plunged in their guilt and perfidy, were made to suffer the just punishment of their sins; which is very far from that salvation, which Paul here assures us of. If any joined the Christians at that time, their number was so inconsiderable, compared with the rest, as that it is ridiculous to give them the name of *all Israel*. Justin says nothing, but that *some of them, being daily instructed in the name of CHRIST, had quitted the way of error*: which differs very much from *all Israel*. We may add, that by that fancy of Grotius, the times of casting away and receiving are entirely confounded; for never was the breaking off, and cutting away the natural branches, more palpably seen, according to the Baptist's prophecy, *Mat. iii. 10*, than at the time that Grotius imagines they were grafted in.

In fine, the prophetic testimony, alledged by the apostle from *Isaiah lix. 20*, confirms our explanation; where the Hebrew words properly

properly denote, *the Redeemer shall come to Zion*; or, according to the Septuagint, *on account of Zion, and unto them that turn from defection in Jacob*. Paul, generally following the Septuagint, has rendered the words somewhat differently, but to the same purpose and meaning. Observe,

First, That the apostle here very justly explains Zion and Jacob of the Jews; for, these are the natural sons of Jacob, natives, citizens of Zion; the others are only naturalized: that name, therefore, primarily and of itself agrees to them. And then also he speaks of those with whom the covenant was made; as it is said, *v. 21, this is my covenant with them*: but that testament and covenant belong to Israel, *whose are the covenants and promises*. Rom. ix. 4. See Lev. xxvi. 44, 45. Moreover, Zion and Jacob denote, not some few of Israel, but the whole body of that nation, as *Gen. xlix. 7*; for in Zion all the tribes had a right, *Psal. cxxii. 4*.

Secondly, The *goel* is promised to Zion; that is, the Kinsman-redeemer, who can justly say, these are mine, and that in right of consanguinity, for I am the nearest kinsman. True it is, CHRIST may be called the *goel* and near kinsman of all nations, on account of his being of the same human nature with them, which he assumed: yet he is chiefly and first of all the *goel* of Israel,

because of them are the fathers, of whom as concerning the flesh CHRIST came, *Rom. ix. 5*. And therefore, perhaps, the apostle said, *the Redeemer shall come out of Zion*; for as the relation, which is expressed by the term *goel*, could not be set forth by the Greek *progenos*, he was willing, by this means, to make up the imperfection of the Greek language, by intimating, that the Redeemer was in such a manner to come to Zion, as at the same time, with respect to his human nature, to come out of Zion. The advent of the Deliverer supposes, also, such a time, in which other lords, besides Jehovah, were to rule over Zion, *Isaiah xxvi. 13*, from whose illegal dominion he was, with a stretched out arm, to set free, and deliver his people.

Thirdly, The work of this Redeemer will be, *to turn away iniquity from Jacob*. In the Hebrew it runs, *he shall come to those that return from defection*. The meaning is the same: he will impart his grace and salvation to those, who, by a true faith and repentance, shall return unto God. And as they cannot give this repentance unto themselves, the Redeemer will bestow it upon them. See *Acts v. 31*. Not only the Greeks have thus rendered the words of the prophet, but also the Chaldee, *and to turn the rebellious of the house of Jacob to the law*. And to this purpose is what follows in *Isaiah* chap.

chap. lix. 21, concerning giving the Spirit of God in Israel, and the putting his word in their mouth. The sum of the whole is, that, by the efficacy of the Redeemer, the Jews are in due time to be converted from their rebellion and transgressions.

Fourthly, As this is not yet accomplished, as to the whole body of the Israelites, and yet the Scripture must be fulfilled, the apostle has justly inferred, that in the last times it will be perfectly fulfilled: for, seeing the foundation thereof is God's covenant with Israel, and this a firm covenant, stable, immutable, and suspended on no ambiguous condition, (for what condition could that covenant admit, which allots both remission of sins and repentance to Israel?) it is not possible, but that every thing shall happen exactly, according to the promise and prediction. *And this is my covenant with them, saith God.* But concerning this covenant he speaks as follows, *Isaiah* liv. 10, "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith Jehovah, that hath mercy on thee." And again, *Jer.* xxxiii. 25, 26, "Thus saith Jehovah, if my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, then I will cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant." Add *Psalms*

cv. 8, 9, and *Deut.* iv. 31. All this being addressed to the whole body of the nation, it must of necessity be fulfilled at the appointed time.

Fifthly, But because some, perhaps, might think that those horrid crimes, of which the Israelites had been guilty, might hinder that blessing of God from coming to them: the apostle adds a testimony, whereby God promises to take away their sins; which cannot but be accompanied with repentance and faith in the Messiah, and the communication of his grace. True, indeed, it is, we have not those words in *Isaiah* liv; but yet they are in *Isaiah* xxvii. 9, where the Greek version hath the very words, *οτις λυμαι τις αμαρτιας αυτου αυτε.* It is not unusual with the apostle to collect several testimonies into one, and to explain the words of one passage by those of another. And indeed this observation was of great importance; for, if any thing should seem to stand in the way of the restoration of the Jews, it was their extreme impiety: wherefore there are frequent promises concerning the expiation of the crimes they had committed, as *Deut.* xxxii. 43. *Jer.* xxxiii. 8, and *Jer.* i. 20.

Some, perhaps, may say, are there not clearer expressions in proof of this matter in the prophets? Why then does the apostle pitch upon these, the force and cogency of which does not at first sight appear? I answer, there

there are such, which we shall presently produce; but here the supreme and admirable wisdom of the Holy Spirit shines forth, partly, because by selecting these, he would bring us to consider entire prophecies, which as it were, he points out to us, and of such a nature as to give full conviction of this matter. Partly, that by arguing from prophecies less evident, he might constrain us to give credit to such as are more clear and express: for, who will take upon him to wrest to a different meaning such evident testimonies, as by the very sound of their words lead to their sense, when he observes, that Paul draws his reasons from such as seemed much more remote from the purpose?

Should any one desire clearer testimonies, we offer the following to his consideration: From Moses, *Lev.* xxvi. 41—45, *Deut.* iv. 30, 31, *Deut.* xxx. 1—6, and *Deut.* xxxii. 43. From the Psalms, *Ps.* cii. 14—18, and *Ps.* lxxxv. 9, 10. From Isaiah, *Isa.* xi. 11, 12, *Isa.* xix. 24, 25, *Isa.* xlix. 14, &c. *Isa.* lxii. throughout. From Jeremiah, *Jer.* iii. 18, &c. *Jer.* xxxi. 1, and from v. 31 to the end; *Jer.* xxxii. 37, &c. *Jer.* xxxiii. 24—26. From Ezekiel, *Ezek.* xxxvi. 24 to the end; *Ezek.* xxvii. throughout, especially from v. 15; *Ezek.* xxxix. 25, to the end. Add *Hosea* iii. 5. All these promises are more sublime, than that the time can be assigned

in which they can be supposed to have been as yet fulfilled. From the New Testament, add *Mat.* xxiii. 29, *Luke* xxi. 24, *2 Cor.* iii. 16.

The reader may please to see what we have said on this head in a particular book concerning the Ten Tribes of Israel, from chap. ix. to the end; where he will find most of those prophecies carefully and at greater length explained.

As from all this it is evident, we are to expect the general conversion of the Israelites in time to come, not indeed of every individual, but of the whole body of the nation, and of the twelve tribes. We chuse not to multiply minute questions, either out of curiosity or incredulity, concerning the time, place, manner, means, and the like circumstances of this mystery, which God has reserved in his power. Let us maintain the thing itself, and leave the manner of it to God. We shall then best of all understand those obscure prophecies which describe it, when we shall be able to compare the event with them. Our Calvin, as his manner is, speaks with prudence and gravity: "Whenever the longer delay is apt to throw us into despair, let us recollect the name mystery, by which Paul clearly puts us in mind, that this conversion is not to be in the ordinary or usual manner; and therefore they act amiss, who attempt to measure

it by their own private sentiments: for, what more perverse, than to account incredible what falls not in with our opinion?"

Being therefore called a mystery, because incomprehensible, until the time of its revelation. Moreover, it is revealed to us, as it was to the Romans, that our faith, acquiescing in the word, may support our expectation, until the effect itself be made manifest. We shall conclude these things with the wish and words of Maimonides, at the end of his "*Morè Necochim*." But may the great and good God himself purify all Israel, according to his promise: then the eyes of the blind will be opened. The people sitting in darkness have seen a great light: to those who sat in the shadow of death, the light is arisen.

To this restoration of Israel shall be joined the riches of the whole church, and, as it were, life from the dead, *Rom. xi. 12*. 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? And *v. 15*, 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?

The apostle intimates, that much greater and more extensive benefits shall redound to the Christian church, from the fulness and restoration of the Jews, than did to the
Gentiles

Gentiles from their fall and diminution: greater, I say, *intensively*, or with respect to degrees; and larger, with respect to extent.

As to *intenseness*, or degrees, it is supposed, that about the time of the conversion of the Jews, the Gentile world will be like a *dead person*, in a manner almost as CHRIST describes the church of Sardis, *Rev. iii. 1, 2*; namely, both that light of saving knowledge, and that fervent piety, and that lively and vigorous simplicity of ancient Christianity, will, in a course of years, be very much impaired. Many nations, who had formerly embraced the Gospel with much zeal, afterwards almost to be extinguished by the venom of mahometanism, popery, libertinism, and atheism, would verify this prophecy: but upon the restoration of the Jews, these will suddenly arise, as out of the grave: a new light will shine upon them; a new zeal be kindled up; the life of CHRIST be again manifested in his mystical body, more lively, perhaps, and vigorous, than ever. Then, doubtless, many Scripture-prophecies will, after their accomplishment, be better understood; and such, as now appear dark riddles, shall then be found to contain a most distinct description of facts. Many candles joined together give a greater light: a new fire laid near another gives a greater heat. And such will the accession
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of the Jews be to the church of the Gentiles.

And not only so, but also many nations, among whom the name of CHRIST had long before been forgotten, shall be seen to flock again to the standard of salvation then erected. For there is a certain fulness of the Gentiles, to be gathered together by the successive preaching of the Gospel, which goes before the restoration of Israel, of which, v. 25; and another richness of the Gentiles, that comes after the recovery of Israel. For while the Gospel was published now to this, then to that nation, others gradually departed from CHRIST: but when the fulness of the Jews is come, it is altogether probable, that these nations will in great numbers return to CHRIST. An almost innumerable multitude of Jews reside in Asia and Africa, among the Persians, Turks, Indians, Chinese, Japanese, and Tartars. When, therefore, by the almighty hand of God, these shall be brought to the communion of the Messiah, their love to him will be more ardent, as their hatred against him had been formerly more bitter. And is it not more than probable, that the nations, among whom they live, being excited by their example and admonitions, shall come into the fellowship of the same faith? Certainly, the words of the apostle lead us to this.

Agreeably

Agreeably to which James has said, *Acts* xv. 15—17. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the LORD, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the LORD, who doth all these things."

The reparation of the fallen tabernacle of David signifies, the restoration of true and spiritual worship among the Israelites. And when that shall come to pass, the rest of mankind, who never gave up their names to CHRIST, and the nations, upon whom his name was formerly called, but who, by their thoughtlessness, lost the benefit of the Gospel, will then with emulation seek the LORD. And what is more evident, than that prophecy in Isaiah—the prophet, chap. lix. 20, 21, having foretold the restoration of Israel, according to the apostle's commentary, immediately, chap. lx. 1, exclaims, "Arise! shine! for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee." Verse 3, "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising," &c. Moreover, the riches of the church at that time are described v. 17, "for brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will
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will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron:" the most magnificent words, to the same purpose follow these. From the consideration of which, Peter Martyr has said, that, indeed, according to almost all the prophets, especially Isaiah, the happiness of the church will be great, which it has not yet attained to, but it is probable that it will then (on the conversion of the Jews) attain to it. We have not, indeed, the least doubt, that there are many prophecies, both in the Old and New Testament, to this purpose, the full meaning of which we ardently pray the Supreme Being may teach his people by the event, the only undoubted interpreter of prophecies. It is, however, our duty to be modest on the head, and not rashly intrude into the secrets of Providence, nor boldly abuse what we are neither allowed to know, nor suffered to search into.

FINIS.