

The Way of Christ Prepared.

An Address Both to Christians and Jews

Duty and Blessedness of Removing Their Mutual Stumbling Blocks:
Preached to the Jews in the Episcopal Jews' Chapel, London, March 12,
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By Edward Bickersteth

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Isa. 57:14. – Cast ye up, cast ye up; prepare the way; take up the stumbling block out of the way of my people.

Christians have very plain, high, and holy duties to fulfill towards the people of Israel. Everything in the New Testament respecting Israel is calculated to excite the tender, compassionate, and kind feelings of Christians towards the Jews. Even with regard to worldly good our duty to them is made clear, we are called *their debtors: For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of these spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.* And, with regard to spiritual things, we are charged to be followers of him who said, *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*

It is with these feelings that I desire now to address a congregation of Jews and Christians, and to bring before them, the solemn charge of the one Lord of all, addressed to all who put their trust in him, and have one common hope to *inherit his holy mountain.*

The people of Israel are here named as the people of God, in whose way stumbling blocks, or occasions of falling into sin are now lying. Hence they are in the following verses described as being *contended with* and under wrath, as smitten of God and afflicted; as froward, wandering in error and mourning. But God has in reserve health and comfort, peace and holiness; he purposes, when they are brought to contrition, to dwell with them and revive them, and restore to them full blessedness.

In order to this, the stumbling blocks must be removed, and there must be a preparation of the way for their return to God. It is to this duty I

now call both Christians and Jews, in the name of the one God *who is rich over all, to all that call upon him*. Let us consider:

1st. The stumbling blocks which we Christians have thrown in the way of the Jews.

2d. The stumbling blocks which the Jews have put in their own way.

3d. The blessed fruits of their removal.

1st. The Stumbling Blocks Which We Christians Have Thrown In the Way of the Jews.

There are many such, and it is our first work who are Christians, it is fully admitted, to seek to remove these; while our own sins are unconfessed and unreproved, what success can we hope for in seeking to free the Jews from theirs. Our Lord's direction is, *first, cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye*.

This step is painful indeed, but absolutely necessary. I will not dwell on the more open sins of Papal apostasy, Mahomedan imposture, or the infidelity of nominal Protestantism, and the general wickedness and immorality of those bearing the Christian name, but rather speak of other stumbling blocks which have been very general among those professing Christianity.

1st. *Persecution* is the first stumbling block which we have placed in their way.

The Lord has not left us without warnings of this sin. He says, Zech. 1:15, *I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction*. Babylon, both literal and mystical, has been especially guilty here. God says to her, Isa. 47:6, *I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst show them no mercy; upon the ancient hast, thou very heavily laid thy yoke – therefore shall evil come upon thee*. Desolation and destruction – God's indignation and wrathful anger are especially pronounced, Psa. 69:26, *on those who persecute him whom God has smitten, and talk to the grief of those whom God has wounded*. Who can read the 137th Psalm, without seeing how deeply God resents injury done to his people?

Many are the awful threatenings against the persecutors of God's people, Isa. 10:12, *It shall come to pass when the Lord hath performed his*

whole work (that is, of judgment), *upon Mount Zion and upon Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the King of Assyria and the glory of his high looks.* And again, Jer. 51:24, *I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done in Zion, in your sight, saith the Lord.* So, in the 25th of Ezekiel, judgments are threatened against the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Edomites, and the Philistines, and the Tyrians, for insulting and injuring the Jews in their afflictions. Judgments were inflicted upon the Egyptians for their treachery to the Jews. (Ezek. 29:6–7). For the same reason Mount Seir was punished. (Ezek. 35). See also Ezek. 36:5, 7.

Now, notwithstanding these warnings, and neglecting them all, nominal Christians have from age to age persecuted the Jews, and have thus necessarily raised mighty prejudices in their mind against the Gospel. The history of the Jews since the rise of Popery, and especially during its power, has been little else but a history of persecutions. They have in their Chronicles registered against us their banishment from England in 1289; their banishment from France in 1394; their banishment from Spain in 1491; and their banishment from Portugal in 1499. Our own country unhappily has taken the lead here. What must be the natural conclusion drawn from this by the Jews: the religion of Jesus of Nazareth is hostile to us; it is full of pride, selfishness, and malignity. O how the meek, humble, and loving Saviour has been dishonoured by this! O what a libel have we put on Christ and his truth! Now this stumbling block must be removed by our firm protestation against this persecuting spirit as wholly contrary to the Gospel of Christ. When Jacob speaks of Simeon and Levi's cruelty and unfaithfulness to the Shechemites, he takes care to separate himself wholly from their spirit: *Simeon and Levi are brethren, instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour; be not thou united; cursed be their anger, for it was fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel.* We must humbly here confess the guilt of our forefathers; and show the true spirit of the New Testament in our Lord's weeping over Jerusalem, and St. Paul's earnest prayer for their salvation.

Contempt of the Jews is another stumbling block which we have placed in their way. Very contrary has our spirit been to the spirit of the Gospel.

True, indeed, God had predicted, Deut. 28:37, of the Jewish nation; *thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee.* This was to come upon them, according to the Divine purpose, for their not hearkening to the voice of God. But as the prophecies respecting the Messiah's being cut off, and his being *delivered by the determinate counsel find foreknowledge of God*, did not at all lessen the guilt of those who took him, and by wicked hands crucified and slew him; so does not this prophecy of our making the Jews a proverb, or our Lord's prophecy of Jerusalem's being *trodden under foot by the Gentiles*, at all lessen the guilt of those inflicting these judgments upon them. Sennacherib was not the less guilty because, on account of the sins of others, God brought it to pass that he *should be to lay waste defended cities into ruinous heaps.* The Divine judgments at length overtook the Assyrian himself.

See how God speaks on this matter to us Gentiles; *Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey.* Ezek. 36:5. O how opposite is all this to the spirit of Christ, loving his enemies and dying for them!

If under all the base and unworthy conduct which Christians have shown to them, and the contumely which they have in such varied forms, for such lengthened ages, and in so many countries heaped upon them, the Jews have become alienated from truths which Christians hold, what wonder need it occasion? The reason is palpable: we have laid this stumbling block in our brother's path, by showing contempt instead of patient, persevering, weeping, acid interceding love.

How then can we remove it, but by a frank, open, and ingenuous condemnation of ourselves for our conduct in this matter; justifying God's righteousness in the prejudices with which the minds of our Jewish brethren have been filled against us; readily acknowledging that to the Israelites *pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, and the fathers, and, as concerning the flesh, the coming of Christ himself;* and in the view of their being broken off for a season, feeling that deep and godly heaviness and continual sorrow which Paul expressed?

Idolatry, is a third stumbling block to be noticed.

Though Christians were and are much warned against this in the New Testament; though they are told again and again, idolaters shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven; though the Apostle Paul warns the Corinthians, *neither be ye idolaters as were some of them; my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry*; though he says, *Come out and be separate, and touch not unclean things*; though the Apostle John gives as a last charge in his general Epistle the solemn and tender admonition, *Little children, keep yourselves from idols*; yet have Christians most fearfully apostatized in Popery, and in the Eastern churches, to the most open idolatry, and left the Jews to be the witnesses both of the unity and spirituality of the true God. Perhaps there are one hundred and thirty millions of nominal Christians who have their representatives in Jerusalem, whose most apparent worship is idolatry. Hence the Jews there, judging of Christianity by Christian worship, have learned to view Christ, our and their Lord and Messiah, as “the man who teaches Christians to worship idols.” Oh, awful stumbling block! When shall it be removed? And though we may not, as Protestants, have thus awfully and openly apostatized: yet if a man may make his belly his god, if covetousness be idolatry, we are not without blame here also. Blessed be God, such labours as those of the Jews’ Society, and our Hebrew Liturgy, and its speedy use in Jerusalem, will, we trust, soon help to remove these most serious hindrances in the way of their return to the Lord.

Neglect of the Law of Moses is a fourth stumbling block placed by Christians in their way.

In our views of our Gospel privileges and the full blessedness there provided for the guilty, we have far too much slighted and neglected the Law. I need not recount what great things are said of the Law. The 119th Psalm is full of its excellence. *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul – more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb*. The New Testament sets it not aside, but establishes it as *holy, just, and good*, and gives a motive and strength before unknown, for obedience to it. Our Lord Jesus Christ, God’s own Son, was made under it; the very end of his work was that the Law might be written by his own Spirit in the hearts of his people. The Old Testament closes with the admonition, *Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments*. The New Testament almost closes with the promise, *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life*.

But Christians have thought of the Law as a severe master. While free from its ceremonial observances, they have spoken in far too unguarded a manner as if the whole were abrogated; terms of contempt have been applied to it; it has been confounded with its self-righteous abuse; it has been viewed merely as a system of terror rather than regarded as given in love, and altogether good and gracious; the whole of it has been treated as if it were beggarly elements. Though men have perverted its institutions, and put them in the place of Christ, and so rested in the outside forms instead of Christ, and by such gross abuse, made them really beggarly elements, yet the whole Law is indeed the eternal word of God; his every word is pure and perfect: nor are we at all in a right state, but as we can say, "*O how I love thy Law.*"

Imagine, then, the effect of this despising of the Law on a Jewish mind! What an argument it becomes against the Gospel! How it justifies them in their rejection of Christianity, and hardens them in their unbelief, when they see in us the inconsistency of despising what we profess to receive as divine!

This stumbling block has to be removed by our setting forth the example of Christ, our Lord, who *magnified the Law and made it honourable*; by showing, as indeed, it were well for us did we fully understand ourselves, the national wisdom of its statutes, the richness of its promises, the typical fullness of all its ordinances, the reasonableness of its services, the depth of its meaning, and the purity of its holiness; and, with all this, its full and entire harmony with the Gospel in foreshadowing its truth, and in sweet earnest of its grace. Oh, that this stumbling block were, indeed, fully taken out of the way by us Christians!

Unbelief of the Prophets is the last stumbling block to be removed by Christians which I would notice.

One of the latest reproofs of our Redeemer to his Church was on this ground, *O fools, and slow of heart, to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?* We, too, have been very slow of heart on the same ground. The promises are full of special privileges hereafter to Israel, and hence has risen a deep-seated and lengthened jealousy of us Gentiles, leading us to unbelief in the plain declarations of the Old Testament Scripture. The restoration of Israel to their own land, though clearly predicted in words inapplicable to any former return, is disbelieved. The return of Christ to

reign over Israel as their King, though again and again asserted both in the Old (Zeph. 3:14–18, Zech. 2:10–12, Ez. 37:21–25, 43:6–9) and in the New Testament (Luke 1:32, Heb. 1:8, Rev. 3:7) is disbelieved. The glory of their nation in the latter day, though the Old Testament be full of it (Isa. 60, Jer. 31, 33; Ez. 20, 34, 36), and the New sanctions the hope (Rom. 11:25–31, Matt. 23:39), is disbelieved. The subordination of the Gentile States to the Jewish nation, though plainly predicted (Isa. 14:1, 60:3, 14; 61:5–9; Ez. 16:61), is disbelieved. Their perpetual continuance as a nation on earth, though expressly stated (Jer. 31:35, 32:37–41, 33:17–26; Ez. 37:25–28), is disbelieved. The resurrection inheritance of their fathers upon earth, though foretold by our Lord (Matt. 22:23–33, 8:11) and his Apostles (Acts 7:5, Heb. 11:8–9; 2 Peter 3:13), as well as the Old Testament Prophets (Dan. 12:2, Ezek. 37), is disbelieved. At least I acknowledge my own guilt in my past unbelief of them things.

The evil effects of this stumbling block are very great. Our mouths are shut when we would enter into argument. How can we convict them of unbelief in plain prophecies, when we ourselves are unbelieving in still plainer prophecies? We must seem to them like aliens wresting away from them their mercies, not like friends seeking their highest good. It shows too, such unacquaintance with the Scriptures, such want of common principles on which to argue, such lax modes of interpretation, and such a doing of violence to the sacredness of God's word, as must needs be real hindrances in the way of their listening to us.

The removal of this stumbling block must be effected by the simple belief, diligent study, and clear announcement of Jewish prophecies; by delight in the prospect of their fulfillment, and pouring out our fervent prayers, and giving our patient labours of love, for this end. *Ephraim must not envy Judah*. We are the children of the Jews, the very seed of Abraham, by the past reception of the Gospel from them; they become ours by the quickly approaching reception of the Gospel from us. Thus shall we, in spirit, fulfill Elijah's office, and *turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers*.

2d. *The Stumbling Blocks Which the Jews Have Put In Their Own Way*.

The confession by us Christians, of our own sins, is needful to lead you, our Jewish brethren, to similar confession on your own ground. And having thus freely testified and acknowledged our own sinfulness, I would

now, with equal plainness, and in the same spirit of love, address you, my Jewish brethren. Think of your rejection by the banishment of the Ten Tribes by Shalmanezar, as you yourselves acknowledge, 2393 years back; think of the destruction of the second Temple by the Romans, and the banishment of the two tribes, as you acknowledge, 1769 years since. God must have strong grounds of controversy in so long a rejection. Let us search for these in those Scriptures of which you acknowledge the divine authority.

In going through your stumbling blocks, I would by no means imply that we Christians have not been guilty in the very same things, if not in the same mode. Far from it; we too have sinned with you; let us *confess our faults one to another, and pray for one another, that we may be healed*. Chiefly, and in the foreground, I place *self-righteousness*. Moses, in whom you trust, has solemnly warned you of this sin, Deut. 9:6: *Understand therefore that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness, for thou art a stiff-necked people*. So Moses again says, Lev. 26:41, speaking of you in this time of your affliction, *that if your uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and you then accept of the punishment of your iniquity, then the Lord will remember his covenant with Jacob, and also his covenant with Isaac, and also his covenant with Abraham, will he remember, and will remember the land*. Nay, God even promises (Deut. 30:6) that he himself will *circumcise your hearts, that you may live*. O, how God pleads with you on this ground in Jeremiah! *How canst thou say, I am not polluted?* And then, after enumerating your sins, he adds, *Yet thou sayest, Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me. Behold, I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned*. Remember, I entreat you, how you attained your restoration from the first captivity, by the deep humiliation and penitent confession of Daniel; yet for seventy years they remained unhumbled, so that Daniel said, *Under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done unto Jerusalem. As it was written in the Law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquity, and understand thy truth*. O stumble no longer at this stumbling stone, your own righteousness. See how all the prophets have borne witness that *the just live by faith, and his soul that is lifted up, is not upright within him*.

Next, we place *traditions of men*. True, we Christians have also here sinned; in Papal superstitions most grievously; and everywhere by trusting

too much in man. But your own Scriptures warn you, my Jewish brethren, of this sin. How plainly Moses speaks on this point, Deut. 4:2: *Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it; that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.* How plainly is it testified, Prov. 30:5–6, *Every word of God is pure; he is a shield to them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.* In the same manner Isaiah predicts of you, *Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear towards me is taught by the precept of men; therefore behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.*

According to your own reckoning your Mishna was completed 1626 years since; your Jerusalem Talmud 1367 years since, and your Babylonian Talmud 1333 years since. And what a stumbling block these present in the path of simple faith in God's word has been sufficiently shown in tracts, published by the Society for promoting Christianity among you. [See M'Caul's "Old Paths," a work full of information.] O return, return to the Law and to the Testimony: *if they speak not according to this, it is because there is no light in them. What is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord?*

Covetousness is another stumbling block in the way of some; I allow the noble liberality of many among you, but love of money is, I fear, a real stumbling stone to some Jews. Nor do I go here on the general report of your fellow creatures; nor on the amazing wealth some of your nation have accumulated; let your own Scriptures be the judge. The words following my text speak very plainly, 5:17: *For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.* So Jeremiah testifies thus: *I will stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land, saith the Lord; for from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness, and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. So Ezekiel testifies, With their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.* (Ezek. 33:31.)

O my Jewish brethren, put away, put away this stumbling block. How can you possibly, to use the words of Job, *make gold your hope, and say to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence,* and really be the children of the

living God, and walking in the light of his countenance? Listen to the words of your own Solomon: *Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandize of it is better than the merchandize of silver; and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things that thou cant desire are not to be compared to her.* How can you be a kingdom of priests to the Lord, the leaders in a heavenly kingdom, while your minds are thus groveling in the mire of this world?

A false view of God, is another stumbling block in your way, my Jewish brethren. While you have kept at the remotest distance from literal and open idolatry, you have made to yourselves a strange god unknown to your fathers. This Moses foretold of you, Deut. 32:21: *They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities, and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people. I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.* This day is this Scripture fulfilled before you. We were not a people of God. We were a foolish nation, and yet how has the Lord honoured us since we believed in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. To this departure from the true God you were always prone. Thus, even of your coming out of Egypt, Amos asks, *Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves.* God takes as no worship of him that which is not in spirit and in truth, and that which has no true views of his real character. And yet what perverted views your Talmud gives of God! How often has God declared by Moses (Deut. 10:17), Samuel (2 Sam. 14:14), and through the Old Testament (2 Chron. 19:7), that *he regardeth not persons*; God does not respect any person. He chose you to be a blessing to the world, and you have perverted it to self-righteousness and high-mindedness, and, despising us Gentiles, and we now, alas, have also fallen into the same sin. Surely the 67th Psalm may teach us both, that, if God is merciful to us and blesses us, and lifts up the light of his countenance upon us, it is *that his way may be known on earth, his saving health among all nations.* Surely your Scriptures contain evidence enough that God is not *the God of the Jews only, but also of us Gentiles.* You have had partial views of God. How strongly Malachi reproves you for this, and thus announces the solemn determination of Jehovah: *I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, neither will I*

accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the Heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts.

Lay aside, then, all these false views of God's partiality. See that his special grace to any is for the good of all. See that his name is *love*. See, as Moses so beautifully reveals, *The Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty and a terrible, which regardeth not persons nor taketh reward. He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and the widow, and loveth the stranger in giving him food and raiment. Love ye, therefore, the stranger, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.*

I add one more stumbling block. The crowning and most fearful of all your stumbling blocks, the sum of the whole is, your *unbelief in the Son of God*. This is your great sin; this is the capital guilt of your nation; this is the whole cause of your other sins, of your dispersion and degradation, and unparalleled affliction, lengthened, as you yourselves acknowledge, nearly 1800 years. You have walked contrary to God in this, and have brought on you that sevenfold punishment so clearly and so often predicted in the 25th of Leviticus. Though Moses has so expressly forewarned you that God would *require it of you, if you should not hearken to the Prophet like himself raised from the midst of you*, you have not hearkened to that Prophet. Though Isaiah had predicted (8:14) that he should be *for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel*, you have not taken the solemn warning. When God said, as Isaiah declares, 28:16, *Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation*; it still came to pass, as David had predicted, *the builders refused this stone: that stone which became the head of the corner*. Thus were Isaiah's words of your unbelief realized, *Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?*

Think not to say the Lord Jesus Christ has not fulfilled the promises of glory. I have already acknowledged the great sinfulness of us Christians in our unbelief of these promises. A right faith in God's word would have led us, as well as you, to see the glory yet to be revealed, as clearly as we see the sufferings really accomplished; and though now we see not yet *all things put under him*, it is only according to his own words delayed, till he return and establish everywhere his own happy kingdom.

Christians are beginning to believe that the kingdom will be restored to Israel; O do you Israelites begin to believe that your fathers have pierced God's only Son, have *denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted in his place, and killed the Prince of Life, whom God raised from the dead*. Let us in joint humiliation put away every stumbling block, and come to the one God through the one Redeemer, *for there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich in mercy to all that call upon him*.

3d. *The Blessed Fruits of Their Removal*.

These fruits are set before us in the verses which follow our text.

1st. *Humiliation and Contrition*. – *For thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit*. When we have removed these stumbling blocks, all our high-minded thoughts of ourselves perish: the ground on which they rested is taken away, and we see what is our real character, as vile and miserable sinners before the Holy God. We get to Isaiah's state of mind when he saw the glory of the Lord: *Woe is me, for am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips*. We gain Job's deep views: *I abhor myself, and, repent in dust and ashes*. Very clear and very gracious are the promises to you, my Jewish brethren, on this very point, in the prophecies of Zechariah: *I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication, and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and are shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn*. Here is that sowing in tears which must precede your reaping in joy. Bitter it is, but blessed, most blessed; it is the beginning of all your true glory.

Revival and Healing. – The promise goes on thus: *To revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. I have seen his ways and will heal him*. God, even our own God, I speak to Jew and Gentile, is full of compassion, and will not contend forever: when he sees the end of affliction answered, and that men are brought to a state of mind in which he can wisely and justly, as well as lovingly and graciously appear for them, then his mercy delights to have free course in doing good to them. As the Lord, in his tender mercy, appeared for Israel again and again, in days that are passed; in Egypt, in the Wilderness, under their Judges and their Kings, in Babylon, under the Maccabees, and in the birth of his Son

Jesus, and the raising up of the Apostles from among them, so he will appear again, far more gloriously, and the former deliverances shall be no more related for the greater deliverance yet to come. Then shall it be said, as Jeremiah twice predicts: *The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers.* (Jer. 16:15–24; 8) It is not a new work we want for Israel, but a revival of former dealings with them. Let us then all plead for Israel, for whose revival both Jew and Gentile are deeply concerned, in the beautiful words of our Prayer book, “O Lord, arise, help us, and deliver us for thy name’s sake. O God, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us, the noble works that thou didst in their days, and in the old time before them.” O when the great Physician comes, how assuredly and how joyfully will he fulfill his gracious promises. *I will heal their backslidings. I will love them freely.* When that Light of the world returns, we shall understand the rich and gracious prediction, *Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings.*

Comfort and Peace, too, are promised: *I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him.* No one can have read the Old Testament promises to Israel, without seeing how much the Holy Ghost dwells on their being comforted. *Thrice* is the command given in one place, *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem.* *Twice* is the promise repeated in another, *As one whom his mother comforteth so will I comfort ye, and ye shall be comforted.* This shows indeed, first, the great depth of their previous mourning and humiliation, but it shows also the fullness and permanence of the comfort that shall be given them. How amazing will be the contrast to their present sorrow when all the rich and great consolations which are in Christ Jesus are imparted. With this, perfect peace will be given. How often do the Scriptures dwell on this peace as the result of our Redeemer’s return and reign over Israel. His title is *the Prince of Peace.* *They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.* All these blessings, my Jewish and Christian brethren, are in reserve for us on putting away our

stumbling blocks. Through Jesus we are one. *He is our peace who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.* O let us together exalt and glorify His name alone.

I cannot forbear another twofold fruit of the removal of these stumbling blocks: *Gladness and Glory.* To these the prophet calls our attention in the latter chapters (Isa. 65:18–19): *Behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy; and I will rejoice in Jerusalem and joy in my people, and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her;* and he bids all that love her, and all that mourn for her, to rejoice and be glad with her. (66:10.) The Lord too promises, *I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream.* (Isa. 66:12). Indeed, when we remember Jerusalem is called by our Lord Jesus in the New Testament, *the city of the great King;* and in the Old Testament, *the throne of God's glory;* and it is said of times yet to come, *the name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there;* when we remember that both Old and New Testaments declare, *the Son of the Highest shall have given unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end;* with such a Monarch, with such a throne, and city, and kingdom, what words can at all describe, what imagination can even reach the exceeding, the full, and the eternal glory yet to be given to Israel!

O when that quickly coming day arrives, while *darkness covers the whole earth,* and the shades of the great tribulation thicken on every side; and the first streaks of the returning Sun of Righteousness paint the distant horizon, as his glory rises more and more upon us, with what shouts of joy will God himself say to Zion, while his glorified hosts re-echo the glad sound, *Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall rise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.*

O brethren, Jews and Christians, let us quickly remove all our mutual stumbling blocks, that this day of full blessedness and glory may at length, in all its healing, shine forth over all the earth.