

THE SHAMES OF CHRISTENDOM

by

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CHAPTER ONE

THE WRITING ON THE WALL

Across the Eastern sky has glowed
The flicker of a blood-red dawn:
Once more the clarion cock has crowed,
Once more the sword of Christ is drawn
A million burning roof-trees light
The world-wide path of Israel's flight.

Where is the Hebrew's fatherland?
The folk of Christ is sore bestead:
The Son of Man is bruised and banned,
Nor finds whereon to lay His head.
His cup is gall, His meat is tears,
His passion lasts a thousand years.

When the long roll of Christian guilt
Against His sires and kin is known,
The flood of tears, the life-blood spilt,
The agony of ages shown,
What oceans can the stain remove
From Christian law and Christian love?

- Emma Lazarus.

The timidity of doubt suggests many reservations in the predictive element in Holy Scripture; but when these have been made, there still remains a solid and uneliminable element of fulfilled prophecy of which no casuistry can get rid.

The history of the Jewish people is an invincible proof of the Divine inspiration of Holy Scripture. Within such recent times as the last decade of the nineteenth century, there were those who laughed at the credulity of the simple people who dared to assert, upon the authority of Scripture, that the Jews would once again find a home in Palestine. The faithless pointed to the Turk in possession and the impossibility under these conditions of such a privilege being granted.

When the simple folk, in reply, pointed to the predictions of Scripture, the skeptic shrugged his shoulders and smiled with kindly tolerance at the crudity of such literal interpretations.

To-day the prophecy is, at least in its beginnings, an accomplished fact.

God gave the supreme revelation of Himself to one race—the Hebrew—first through Moses and the prophets, and then after centuries through which He endured their rebellion and disobedience, through His Son born of a Jewish woman. Why He chose them it is impossible to say.

This fact of God's choice does not imply favoritism. His selection of the Jews neither indicates moral superiority on their part nor injustice upon God's. The "Chosen Race" was chosen for the end in view and not of arbitrary caprice. It may be that, in spite of their disobedience and failure, they had in some respects those characteristics which best qualified them to be the repository and custodian of that revelation. The fact of choice we know. We know, too, that for centuries He has dealt with them in a distinctive way. Their position in the world to-day is just what we should expect if we interpret Scriptural predictions in their simple sense.

Hundreds of years ago their history was foretold with a wealth of detail too great for mere foresight, however strong and masterly. Nothing less than the acceptance of Divine inspiration will satisfy any reasoning but that which is "sicklied o'er with the pale cast" of chronic skepticism. Let us take one passage only in the prophetic forecast—Deuteronomy 28. It is too long to quote at length, but it should be read in full.

The outstanding portions are perhaps:

- Verse 25. **"Thou shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth."**
- Verse 37. **"Thou shalt become an astonishment a proverb, and a byword, among all people whither the LORD shall lead thee."**
- Verses 49 to 57. These found a partial fulfillment more than once, but were only completely realized at the terrible siege of Jerusalem under Titus, A. D. 70.
- Verse 64. **"The Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other."**
- And finally, in verses 65 to 67 we have a vivid picture of the stricken Jew in his dispersion throughout the weary years since the destruction of Jerusalem.

No people has suffered so terribly as this tragic race. There has been scarcely a country under the sun where they have not endured shame, scorn, robbery, outrage and massacre. Yet through it all they have been amazingly preserved. They have neither been annihilated nor absorbed. They remain inassimilable and indestructible.

This is all the more remarkable as they have had no rallying-point, no focus for religious ideals or national aspirations. Their state is, as Hosea prophesied over two thousand years ago, **"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim"** (Hosea 3:4).

They have been ravaged and plundered, harassed by all kinds of galling restrictions and disabilities, they have been ground in the mortar of persecution, the ghettos of the world have been made a shambles by merciless and insensate pogroms, and yet from the ruins of all he has loved, lived for and lost the Jew has arisen, bloody it may be, and despairing, but unconquered and unconquerable.

God has set his seal upon him and preserved him for his own purpose. **“I am the Lord, I change not I therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed”** (Malachi 3:6).

The promises of God to this effect are scattered broadcast over the pages of Holy Writ, but there may be mentioned, to localize the prediction, Jeremiah 31:35, 37, and 33:24-26. **“Thus saith the Lord, if the heavens above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, then will I also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done.”** Paul reasserts this marvellous providence in Romans 11.

Alongside these solemn warnings of the Almighty to the chosen race there are others to the Gentiles tempted to persecute or oppress them. The fact that they were doomed to suffer for disobedience does not exonerate those who ill-treat them, any more than the fact that Christ was to die for mankind excuses the crime of those who put Him to death. So promises and warnings are given (see Psalm 122:6, and Isaiah 60:12), and these have had a literal fulfillment, as the pages of secular history amply testify.

God works for the most part through natural causes. The Jew has been generously endowed with intellectual, moral and physical gifts. These gifts have secured the ascendancy of individual Jews in almost every field of human achievement in all nations where they have been scattered, and this out of all proportion to their numbers.

It is not as fully recognized as it should be amidst the frequent complaint against unfair Jewish competition, that while this competition may cripple the individual Gentile competitor here and there, yet the tide of Jewish prosperity carries, of necessity, upon its bosom the general well-being of the community in which the Jew is domiciled, and where he has been given freedom to develop his natural ability for commerce the community as a whole has profited, and in this prosperity his out-distanced rival has shared to a very considerable extent.

This is seen in Palestine, where the Arab, his own grumblings and the indignation of his friends notwithstanding, has benefitted materially, physically and intellectually by Jewish enterprise. Where, on the other hand, the Jew has been so fettered that his natural ability has been crushed, he has remained impoverished and depressed, and this poverty and depression has its inevitable effect on the general condition of the community that has depressed him.

So far from fearing Jewish competition is Mr. Gordon Selfridge that he regards it as a healthy stimulus to trade. He wrote a letter of welcome to Mr. Gamage on the occasion of the opening of the Gamage stores in Oxford Street. Previously he had been obliged to apply a spur to his enterprise by imagining a Mr. Epstein across the way threatening his commercial supremacy. The presence of an English rival has saved him that trouble.

It has been urged, rather whimsically perhaps, that the Egyptians, who tried to arrest the growing strength of this people by drowning all new-born Hebrew boys in the Nile, were themselves drowned in the Red Sea; that the men who sought Daniel's destruction by flinging him to the lions were themselves devoured by those lions; and that Haman, who plotted the extermination of the Jews throughout the Medo-Persic Empire and the hanging of Mordecai, the Jew, on a gallows fifty cubits high, was himself hanged upon that gallows.

Is it mere historical coincidence that the Empires of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Greece and Rome, all of whom in turn oppressed the Jews, have in turn been buried in the dust of the past, while the Persian Empire which restored them still stands amongst the nations of the world?

It is at least certain that the freedom given to the Jews in Spain during the Moorish occupation to exercise their capacity for commerce, culture and finance contributed greatly to the wealth and splendor of Spain and her ascendancy amongst the European Powers, and that their expulsion under the Christian regime in 1492 was followed at length by the decline of Spanish prestige and prosperity. The same in general may be said to be true of other countries in so far as they have given the Jew liberty to work out his own salvation.

It is in accordance with natural law that as you cannot have a diseased or depressed element in any community without its disease and depression reacting upon the general life of the community, so you cannot have a progressive and prosperous element without its progressiveness and prosperity being reflected in the well-being of the community as a whole.

So God's assurance to Abraham and to his seed, "**I will bless them that bless thee,**" works out through natural law in the destiny of nations.

It is perhaps apposite to close this chapter with the words of Mark Twain—

"If the statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one per cent, of the human race. It suggests a nebulous dim puff of star dust in the blaze of the milky way. Properly the Jew ought hardly to be heard of, but he is heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people, and his commercial importance is extravagantly out of proportion to the smallness of his bulk.

"His contributions to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine and abstruse learning are also altogether out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers. He has made a marvellous fight in the world in all the ages—has done it with his hands tied behind him. He could be vain of himself and be excused for it.

"The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they are gone.

"Other people have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now or have vanished.

“The Jew saw them all, but beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?”

~ end of chapter 1 ~

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