

of their argument. They, however, always heard with attention all that I had to urge against them, and although there was nothing like conviction produced in any of them, still I could see that there existed degrees of obstinacy among them, and on some occasions there were apparent relents in their obstinate hearts. One of them, of his own accord, turned up the passage, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah," &c.; and he offered another translation of it, but he could not shew that it had any foundation in grammatical principle. I mention this, chiefly to shew that the Jews, in general, are by no means sunk in utter ignorance as to the ground on which the controversy between their church and the Christians is carried on; but on the contrary, that they have been attentive, and to a considerable degree, to collect all the arguments out of infidel writings against Christianity, and I mention this with the view of exciting a hope, that this dark spirit which has gone forth upon so devout a theme may be enlightened, since it is a spirit of enquiry; though, alas, a gloomy spirit which goes in quest of shreds to conceal the light which shines forth from that bright volume which is still read in their synagogue; still, such as it is, it is better than no enquiry at all, and it is fervently to be wished, that the brightness of that celestial light may speedily burst forth upon them, or, if this may not be, that it may continue to shine upon them with so calm and celestial a radiance, that while the spirit of enquiry still remains, it may become a spirit meek and docile, and which is soon to rejoice in the full light and liberty of a child of God.

It appeared to me not unfrequently during the conversation which I had with them, that they had some secret bond among themselves, similar to that which is spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles, where it is said, that the Jews banded together and bound themselves under a great curse, to prevent the spread of the gospel, by removing Paul. This appeared to me in the manner in which they expressed themselves when I urged upon them the claims of the gospel salvation, or held forth to them the sure declarations of prophecy as to their restoration when they accepted of Christ as their Saviour; they then stated in dark language the impossibility of a Jew being a Christian; and while they said this I either saw, or fancied I saw something lurking behind which they were not willing to disclose; for there was expressed in their manner something like a sentiment of hopelessness, and a sullen expression, as if the person addressing them was not privy to all they knew and felt on the subject. I observed also, that something of the same feeling appeared in their manner about the late conversion of a

Jew in Glasgow; they said, that the man was bribed. If there be such oaths, I apprehend that they conceive that these cannot be forgiven, and hence the sullen reiteration that it is impossible for a Jew to have been led to embrace Christianity by virtuous means, but from the basest means, since that perjury proves them to be the most worthless of men. Another explanation of the assertion which they so frequently make that it is impossible a Jew should be a Christian, may arise from the daring blasphemies to which they have accustomed their minds in reference to Christ. I have already referred to one of these malignant blasphemies, drawn from the word *Berashit*. And I am persuaded that this is not the only example of their having proceeded to a fearful length in cherishing such wickedness, for they said, after shewing me this mystery as they called it, that they could shew me more, but I had no desire to enter farther into the secrets of their abominations. Whichever of these be true, and I believe that there is truth in both,—that they blaspheme the Lord in their hearts, and bind themselves together against Him, it should teach all who attempt to convince the Jews, to hold out from the first the free door of access through the blood of the Redeemer, so that the stray sheep may not be prevented from returning by the apprehension that the door of mercy is shut against them.

They had other cavils which they brought forward against Christianity. They asked why Josephus did not mention the miracles of Christ. I said that the miracles of Christ were notorious when Josephus wrote—that they were attested by independent evidence, and that the only inference which can be deduced from his silence is, that he was afraid to state that evidence, which, as a Jew, he had rejected. One of the Jews however, after arguing from the silence of Josephus, admitted that he had spoken of Christ, and now received as genuine the passage in that historian which he had just denied; and he here repeated the first clause of that famous passage, "About this time appeared a man, named Jesus, if he might be called a man." He here stopped and went on to state, that Josephus meant to say, that Christ was unworthy to be called a man; this I took to be one of those blasphemies, of which their heart seems so full, and which appears to be so characteristic of the Jews, even at this period of the world, in reference to Christ; I mentioned to them, that their fathers never denied the miracles of Christ, but ascribed them to satanic agency or magic. They seemed glad to lay hold of this last word, and assented, apparently, to the explanation. I mention this, to shew at what a low state of mental cultivation the