

## **A Short Demurrer to the Jewes William Prynne**

This is an extract from the antisemitic parliamentarian William Prynne who, in 1655, wrote *A short demurrer to the Jewes long discontinued barred remitter into England* comprising an exact chronological relation of their first admission into, their ill deportment, misdemeanors, condition, sufferings, oppressions, slaughters, plunders, by popular insurrections, and regal exactions in; and their total, final banishment by judgment and edict of Parliament, out of England, never to return again: collected out of the best historians and records. With a brief collection of such English laws, Scriptures, reasons as seem strongly to plead, and conclude against their readmission into England, especially at this season, and against the general calling of the Jewish nation.

### **To the Christian Reader.**

I was asked the question.; Whether there were any Law of England against bringing in the Jews amongst us? for the Lawyers had newly delivered their Opinions, there was no Law against it. To which I answered, That the Jews were in the year 1290. all banished out of England, by Judgement and Edict of the King and Parliament, as a great Grievance, never to return again: for which the Commons gave the King the fifteenth part of their Moveables: and therefore being thus banished by Parliament, they could not by the Laws of England, be brought in again, without a special Act of Parliament, which I would make good for Law.

He replied, I wish it might not be done otherwise; &, that this business had been formely moved in the Bishops time, rather than now. To which I subjoyned; That it was now a very ill time to bring in the Jews, when the people were so dangerously and generally bent to Apostacy, and all sorts of Novelties and Errors in Religion; and would sooner turn Jews, than the Jews Christians. He answered, He thought it was true, and was sorry he could not discourse longer with me, the Committee about the Jews being sat, and staying for him as he feared. Whereupon, as he was turning in towards White-Hall-Gate, I told him, The Jews had been formerly great Clippers and Forgers of Mony, and had crucified three or four Children in England at least, which were principal causes of their banishment. To which he replied, That the crucifying of Children was not fully charged on them by our Historians, and would easily be wiped off. Whereto I answered, He was much mistaken: and so we parted.

As I kept on my way, in Lincolnes-Inne Fields, passing by seven or eight maimed Soldiers on Stilts, who begged of me; I heard them say aloud one to another, We must now all turn Jews, and there will be nothing left for the poor. And not far from them another company of poor people, just at Lincolnes-Inne back Gate, cried aloud to each other: They are all turned

Devils already, and now we must all turn Jews. Which unexpected concurrent Providences and Speeches, made such an impression on my Spirit, that before I could take my rest that night, I perused most of the passages in our English Histories concerning the Jews carriage in England, with some of their misdemeanors in other parts, to refresh my memory, and satisfie my judgement; making some Collections out of them, which after I enlarged and digested into this ensuing Demurrer and was induced to publish it (knowing no particular discourse of this Subject extant) for the general information, satisfaction of others, and honour of my blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ the righteous, whom the Jews with malicious hearts, and wicked hands crucified in person heretofore, and their posterity by their blasphemies, despiteful actions against Christ, his Kingdom, Offices, Gospel crucified afresh every day, trampling under foot the Son of God, putting him to open shame, offering despite to the Spirit of Grace, & counting the blood of the Covenant an unholy thing. And in all their publick and private Devotions, praying constantly for the sudden, universal, total, final subversion, extirpation, perishing of Christs Kingdom, Gospel, and all his Christian Members, which they plot, and continually expect, such is their implacable transcendent malice. I have deduced their introduction into England, only from William surnamed the Conqueror, because I finde not the least mention of them in any of our British, or Saxon Histories, Councils, Synods, Canons, which doubtlesse would have mentioned them, and made some strict Laws or Canons, against their lewish as well as against Pagan Superstitions, had they exercised.

How the Nation of the Jews (once Gods own beloved, special, chosen People) after their malicious crucifying of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and imprecation, That his Blood might be on them and their children, were for this their crying sin especially, made the saddest spectacles of divine Justice, and humane Misery of all other Nations in the World, being quite extirpated out of their own land, almost totally deleted by the sword, pestilence, famine; carried away Captives, and dispersed like so many Vagabonds over the face of the whole Earth, as the very off-scowring of the World, and execration, derision of all other people, having no place, City, form of Government, or Republike of their own, in any corner of the Universe; (according to Gods Cominations against them Or what banishments, punishments, oppositions, restraints by penal Lawes, suppressions of their Synagogues, Ceremonies, they have received in all ages from Christian Kings, Princes, Republikes in Forein parts, for their implacable malice, blasphemie against our Saviour Jesus Christ, Christians, Christian Religion, and other Crimes and Misdemeanors to which they are most addicted, is not the subject of my intended Brief Discourse, I shall not spend time to recite them, but wholly confine my self to, a Brief Relation of their first admission into, their ill deportment, misdemeanors, sufferings, popular insurrections against them in, and their final banishment by Judgement and Edict of Parli|ment out of England, never to return again, collected out of the best Historians: to which I shall subjoyn, a taste only of such Laws, Scriptures, and Reasons, as seem strongly to plead against their readmission into our Island, especially at this season.