

GOD'S MUCH DIVERSIFIED WISDOM AND MERCY

"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? For if the first-fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches." – Romans 11:15,16.

THE JEWISH nation was reconciled to God in a typical way, and thus became His peculiar people. All His promises belonged to them – no such promises were made to the Gentiles. The relationship of the Jews to God was through their Covenant. But after eighteen hundred and forty-five years of special favor, their rejection of Messiah demonstrated their unworthiness of a continuance of their special privileges. In the time of testing they were found wanting, and were given over to blindness and disruption until their "double" – eighteen hundred and forty-five years of disfavor – should be accomplished.

All, however, were not thus rejected from favor. A faithful remnant were gathered into the Gospel Fold, while the remainder were "scattered and peeled." This faithful remnant were the First-fruits class of the Church of Christ. God then sent His Message out to the whole world. Romans, Greeks, British, French, Germans, Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, etc. – all nations – have had the same opportunity. This does not mean that all individuals of all nations have been given this opportunity; but that the Lord has selected here and there one of suitable character, who gladly responded to the Message – those who, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, had the hearing ear. God gave to these the Message of reconciliation, and sent them forth to bear the Glad Tidings to others of the same class.

All who believed that Message were reconciled to God through the death of His Son. They have been a company of

sacrificers, gladly laying down their lives as followers in the Master's steps. The Message of this great salvation has gone forth through all the years of this present Age, and some from every nation have responded and come into the Body of Christ. This could not have been if the Jews had not proven unfaithful as a nation and been turned aside from favor. The Gentiles have known this. They saw that the favor of God, the blessing of God, turned to them at the same time that it was withdrawn from the Jews.

"LIFE FROM THE DEAD"

The Natural Israelites, even after their rejection from favor as a people, had still an opportunity as *individuals* of coming into Christ, but no special favor as a nation. Indeed, their rejection of Jesus as their Messiah, and their bitter prejudice and blindness have acted as a great gulf to separate them as a people from the Gospel Message; and but very few of them have ever accepted God's Message in Christ. As the Apostle here declares, their blindness as a nation is not to be removed until "the fulness of the Gentiles [to complete the Gospel Church] be come in." This time is now about here; the Gospel Church is about complete.

Do we remember how the restoration of Natural Israel is to be accomplished? Yes. The Scriptures declare that it is to be brought about through the New Covenant – "This is My Covenant unto them, *when I shall take away their sins.*" It will be at the establishment of Messiah's Kingdom; Messiah is then to inaugurate this Covenant. What will this mean to the Jews? It will mean that their "double" is fulfilled, that "their appointed time is accomplished, that their iniquity is pardoned." [See STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol. 2, Study 7.] It will mean their resurrection from the dead – both nationally and individually, both symbolically and literally. "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world [in the receiving of the Gentile 'wild olive branches' into the 'olive tree,' from which the majority of the Jews

were broken off], what shall the receiving [back] of them be, but life from the dead?" – Romans 11:15.

Here we have another Scriptural teaching of the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead. The promises are to be fulfilled which were made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, the Prophets and others. Though God cast the nation off for a time, He will regather them, according to His promise, when their period of chastisement shall be ended – their "seven times." [See Vol. 2, Study 4.] Extending the thought, we see that the Promise of God to Abraham of the blessing of all the nations and kindreds and families of the earth through his Seed – the Heavenly and the earthly, "the stars of Heaven" class and "the sands upon the seashore" class – must yet be fulfilled. (Genesis 22:15-18.) The fulfilment of this Promise will necessitate the awakening of the entire human race from the tomb. Thus the munificence of God's wonderful provision for His human creatures is soon to be manifested to angels and men – to the living and the dead – to all the human family.

FIRST-FRUIT AND AFTER-FRUIT – ALL HOLY

In verse 16 the Apostle is showing that as the First-fruit of this great "olive tree" growing out of the root of the Abrahamic Covenant is holy, so is the entire fruitage. Although this Promise to Abraham was given directly to his earthly seed, nevertheless God, who knew the end from the beginning, knew that the First-fruit of this Promise would be Abraham's spiritual Seed – the Christ, Head and Body. And yet this breaking off of many of the natural branches, and the grafting in of "wild olive branches" to take their place, which has been going on during this Gospel Age, was not the limit of God's great Plan. It was His purpose to have a holy Seed. Abraham was first tested, and all who were to constitute this Seed were to be likewise tested; but these were to be used as

agents in the hands of Jehovah for the carrying out of His Plan of Salvation.

As this First-fruit class is holy, the Apostle declares, "the lump is also holy." The word *lump* here would better be translated *mass*, for he is speaking of people. The root is holy – the Covenant of Jehovah, confirmed by His oath to Abraham. So all who become joined to this root, and receive their life and their privileges and blessings from it, will also be holy.

Abraham typically represented Jehovah God; Isaac represented the Son, our Lord Jesus; and Rebecca, the wife of Isaac, represented the Bride of Christ, the members of His Body. All these together – Father, Son and Bride – will bring forth a holy, earthly Israel. This will eventually include all mankind who shall come under the terms of the New Covenant. So Israel restored, and the entire world – all of the race of Adam who will return to harmony with God – will constitute the "holy lump," or mass – the after-fruit.

Looking at the deep workings of God's Plan thus, in the light of what He tells us is *future*, as well as of what is past, how wonderful it is! Oh, the rich depths of God's wisdom and knowledge! How useless for us to try to discover His dealings except as He is pleased to reveal His plans to us. His doings are all mysteries to us except as we are enlightened by His Spirit. Who knew this gracious Plan, so much beyond human conception? Who helped the Lord to arrange such a Plan, think you? This is not human wisdom. God only could [R5533 : page 271] be its Author. A Jew would never have planned to graft in Gentiles to share the *chief* blessings of the Promise. A Gentile never would have arranged the original stock and branches Jewish and himself a favored *graft*. No, the Plan is clearly of God, and well illustrates both His goodness and His just severity. Of Him is all the Plan;

through His power it is all brought to pass, and to Him be the glory forever.

