

SITTING WITH ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB IN THE KINGDOM

Question.—Who are meant when it is said, "Many shall come from the east and from the west and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of heaven"?—Matt. 8:11.

Answer.—As already pointed out in the DAWN series, the Gospel church only will constitute the kingdom in its highest and strictest sense; but Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the ancient worthies will be the chief ministers of that kingdom in the world of mankind, and all mankind will be invited to come into harmony with the spiritual kingdom, that God's will may be done in this, as an earthly class, as it is done in the heavenly class. In this sense of the word, all who shall accept of the terms and conditions of the kingdom will sit down, or be at rest and at peace with God, with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the faithful of the earthly class. Thus it will be seen that the Lord is pointing to a large class of the world of mankind who will ultimately become citizens of the earthly phase of the kingdom. This same thought is represented in Revelation, where it is intimated that all the worthy will enter into the city—the kingdom—while without will be all the unworthy, who love and serve sin, subjects of the second death.

"CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE"

Question.—Who are the "children of disobedience" of Eph. 2:2?

Answer.—Since Father Adam was created in God's likeness, and is designated a son of God, it follows that all of his children, had they remained in harmony with God, would have been sons of God,—earthly sons. But since Adam became disobedient, and all of his children shared in his fall, all of the race of Adam are children of disobedience, children under punishment, under wrath, except those who have "escaped the condemnation that is upon the world," by acceptance of the divine provision of favor and return to harmony with their Creator. Those who return to harmony with God through the appointed way become children of obedience; those who do not, even though they have not yet had the full opportunity which God designs they ultimately shall have to discern good from evil, and though they may choose the good, are, nevertheless, even now denominated "children of disobedience" and "children of wrath."

DEAD TO THE LAW BY THE BODY OF CHRIST

Question.—In Romans 7:4 we read: "Ye also are become dead to the Law by the *body* of Christ that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead." What body is meant—the body of Jesus' flesh or "the church his body"?

Answer.—It refers to the flesh of Jesus, whose death cancelled all claims of the Law against a believing Jew—made free to become united to the risen Christ (the Lord of Glory) as new creatures, as his bride.

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"BAPTIST" VIEWS CHANGING

TESTIMONY OF AUGUSTUS H. STRONG, D.D., LL.D.

Doctor Strong is an authority among Baptists, the President of their principal theological seminary, located at Rochester, N. Y. His public discourse, delivered at the "General Denominational Meeting" held in Cleveland, Ohio, last May, had the approval of that assembly as indicated by its "request" that the sermon be printed for general use. The changes of doctrinal views to which he calls attention may therefore be regarded by the public as endorsed by Baptists in general.

We are by no means opposed to changes of views, believing heartily in the old worldly adage, "A wise man changes sometimes, but a fool never." We were glad when our Presbyterian brethren displaced their old creed with a new one, but sorry they prevaricated on the subject by telling the world that they still retain the old creed—merely made a new statement of it.

Of course we agree with much that Dr. Strong has to say. Like other men of talent, he is able to state some matters in such terms that even his enemies and doctrinal opponents could not wholly dissent, and to so gloss other matters with sophistry as to mislead the uncritical and confiding of his hearers—whether educated or illiterate. We regret to note that such tendencies—called "diplomacy" in politics, "shrewdness" in business circles, and "falsehood" in common parlance—are more and more creeping over all prominent theologians. Their excuse, we presume, would be "necessity."

Christendom is admittedly in a time of creedal upheaval and transformation, and quiet *deception* of the "old fogies" is considered a virtue, preventing a serious commotion. The hope is that the rising generation will by these deceptive phrases be kept in line until the "old fogies" are all dead, and then it can be pointed out that "our denomination changed its views slightly in your fathers' days and without their protest, and hence with their indorsement," and thus the most radical changes would pass unchallenged by the masses.

All this is a great mistake—a seriously wrong course, even though pursued with good intentions. It amounts to—"Let us do evil that good may follow: let us continue to dishonor God and practice double-dealing on our too-confiding flocks, that our denominations may maintain their standing, numbers and influence, and that we may preserve our dignity, honor of men and light and remunerative employment."

But let us examine these Baptist changes and note whether or not they mark advances or retrogressions, as viewed from the Biblical standpoint. We begin with their—

"OLD AND NEW VIEWS OF SIN"

"But our fathers did not see, as we do, that man's relation to Christ antedated the Fall and constituted an underlying and modifying condition of man's life. Humanity was naturally in Christ, in whom all things were created and in whom they all consist. Even man's sin did not prevent Christ from still working in him to counteract the evil and to suggest the good. There was an internal, as well as an external, preparation for man's redemption. In this sense, of a divine principle in man

striving against the selfish and godless will, there was a total redemption, over against man's total depravity; and an original grace, that was even more powerful than original sin.

"The great Baptist body has become conscious that total depravity alone is not a sufficient or proper expression of the truth; and the phrase has been outgrown. It has been felt that the old view of sin did not take account of the generous and noble aspirations, the unselfish efforts, the strivings after God, of even unregenerate men. For this reason there has been less preaching about sin, and less conviction as to its guilt and condemnation. The good impulses of men outside the Christian pale have been often credited to human nature, when they should have been credited to the indwelling spirit of Christ. I make no doubt that one of the radical weaknesses of our denomination at this present time is its more superficial view of sin."

Here we find a new error introduced as an antidote for an old one. There is not one word in the Bible about "total depravity." Baptists, Congregationalists and Presbyterians got this phrase and conception from Calvin. It is an absurdity on its face. The proper, Scriptural thought is this, *Man is so depraved as to be totally unable to recover himself*, so as to regain perfection and divine fellowship. This is the Scriptural proposition—substantiated by all the New Testament writings.

Why are all the creeds which contain this "total depravity" feature gaining in disrepute? Because it fixes matters for the heathen and infants—negating the idea that these could pass into heaven acceptable to God without faith and regeneration. All along, these qualities of faith and regeneration in the parent have been counted as sufficing for his children dying in infancy; but, with the eternal torment idea still latent, modern thinkers with any heart repudiate the thought that all but regenerated believers and their children, the great mass of humanity, are rushing into such an awful eternity at the rate of over 80,000 every twenty-four hours.

But note the *new error*, that it is worse than the former in that it is more subtle,—sophistry less likely to be detected by the average mind. Think of it! "Humanity was *naturally in Christ!*" Either the learned gentleman is sadly confused on the subject or else he is trying his best to confuse others. If the gentleman meant to say that divine grace planned a universal redemption before the fall occurred and that in due time and in some manner all the race will get a share of that blessed provision, he would be in full accord with us respecting the Scripture teaching. If he meant this we assume that he would have said it.

We deny that "humanity was naturally in Christ." When Adam was perfect he needed not to be *in* Christ, for being sinless and in the divine image he had relationship with his Creator without a mediator. It was sin and its sentence that made necessary a Mediator and his work of (1) atonement for *our*

sins, and (2) the deliverance of the willing and obedient from the *penalty of sin*, death.

Has Dr. Strong forgotten the words of the Apostle, pointing to the work of the cross as a previous essential to the return of sinners to God? Hearken—"When we were *enemies* we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." (Rom. 5:10) "The friendship of the world is enmity against God." (Jas. 4:4) "The world by wisdom knows not God." (1 Cor. 1:21) "Holy Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee." (John 17:25) "The whole world lieth in the wicked one." (1 John 5:19) "Ye are of your father the devil, for his works ye do." (John 8:44) "Ye are children of wrath even as others." (Eph. 2:3) "Condemnation passed upon all because all are sinners." (Rom. 5:12) Ye were "without God and having no hope in the world." (Eph. 2:12) "If any man be in Christ *he is a new creature*; old things are passed away and all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17) Does Dr. Strong think that *all* Baptists are so unfamiliar with their Bibles that they will fail to remember these and scores of other pointed statements to the same effect? Or does he think that, remembering these, the Baptist people will take his declarations as more inspired than those of our Lord and his apostles? We are in doubt—which?

Mark the Apostle's argument respecting Christ's relationship to the world and the universe. So far from intimating that the world is already in Christ, the Apostle declares that, "In the dispensation of the fullness of times [the Millennium]" God will "gather together in one all things in Christ."—Eph. 1:10.

Let us next note the *new* Baptist views on "The Atonement." Dr. Strong says:—

"THE ATONEMENT"

"We must acknowledge also that our conceptions of Christ's atonement have suffered some change. Yet that change has been in the nature of a more fundamental understanding of the meaning of atonement, and its necessity as a law of universal life. To our fathers the atonement was a mere historical fact, a sacrifice offered in a few brief hours on the cross. It was a literal substitution of Christ's suffering for ours, the payment of our debt by another, and upon the ground of that payment we are permitted to go free. Those sufferings were soon over, and the hymn, 'Love's Redeeming Work is Done,' expresses the believer's joy in a finished redemption. And all this is true. But it is only a part of the truth.

"The atonement, like every other doctrine of Christianity, is a fact of life; and such facts of life cannot be crowded into our definitions, because they are greater than any definitions we can frame. The atonement is a substitution, in that another has done for us what we ought to have done but could not do, and has suffered for us what we deserved to suffer but could not suffer without loss of holiness and happiness forever and ever. But Christ's doing and suffering is not that of one external and foreign to us. He is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh; the bearer of our humanity; yes, the very life of the race. The life that he lived in Palestine and the death that he endured on Calvary were the revelation of a union with mankind which antedated the Fall. Being thus joined to us from the beginning, *he has suffered in all human sin*; in all our affliction he has been afflicted; so that the Psalmist can say: 'Blessed be God, who daily beareth our burden, even the God of our salvation.' So we add to the idea of SUBSTITUTION the idea of SHARING; and see in the cross, not so much the atonement itself, as the revelation of the atonement.

"The sufferings of Christ take deeper hold upon us when we see in them the expression of the two great truths: that holiness must make penalty to follow sin; and that love must share that penalty with the transgressor."

* * *

We cannot escape the conviction that the author of the above words did not want his hearers to understand his meaning;—that he desired to repeat the words *atonement* and *substitution* so as to give the impression that he still held the thoughts covered by those words, but that he now had *more, along the same lines*. The contrary is, we feel sure, the truth. This D.D., like all under the influence of "higher criticism" and evolution theories, has lost faith in the Bible narrative of a primary sinless condition in Eden, when our first parents were in God's likeness, from which they fell into sin and its death penalty, from which they were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ as man's *substitute*, effecting an atonement before God for original sin.

The gentleman seems to twist the plain word *atonement*, and as though he would have us understand that God and his creatures have always been *at-one* or in harmony, and that man did not know this and improperly supposed himself under a

"curse" and needing a Redeemer. This view seems to be that the cross of Christ was not necessary to *secure* divine favor, but was expedient as a showing to man that God *always had loved him*, that God *never had "curse"* or "sentenced" him and cast him off from divine favor. This is the new view common amongst clergymen of every school and denomination—the *no-ransom* view, which denies that the Lord *bought us*.—2 Pet. 2:1; 1 Cor. 7:23.

The italics of above quotation are ours; note them. The arguments are cunningly framed and deceptive. The Doctor does not come out courageously and say, "Our new theories entirely ignore and cast aside the doctrine of atonement for sinners by a ransom-substitute, and offer you instead the thought that our race never was perfect, hence never did fall from perfection and divine favor, hence never did sin any more than God expected they should, hence needed no redemption from sin and no release from a special sin-penalty, because there is none; and the story of Genesis about a fall and a sentence, and all the reiterations of the Lord and apostles along the same lines are mere fudge, as all we learned higher critics have recently discovered."

Instead of thus telling the people plainly, the reverse policy, as usual, seems to be pursued—the policy of confusing the people by complex statements. Yet it may be that Doctor Strong is confused and is merely doing his best. The following statement from his sermon gives us a gleam of hope, though it leaves the presentation as a whole the more obscure. He says:

"The moral influence of the atonement has taken deep hold upon our minds, and we are in danger of forgetting that it is the holiness of God, and not the salvation of men, that primarily requires it. When sharing excludes substitution, when reconciliation of man to God excludes reconciliation of God to man, when the only peace secured is peace in the sinner's heart and no thought is given to that peace with God which it is the first object of the atonement to secure, then our whole evangelical system is weakened, God's righteousness is ignored, and man is practically put in place of God."

RESTRICTED COMMUNION OF BAPTISTS

On this topic Dr. Strong said:—

"If I am asked whether Baptists still hold to restricted communion, I answer that our principle has not changed, but that many of us apply the principle in a different manner from that of our fathers. We believe that baptism logically precedes the Lord's Supper, as birth precedes the taking of nourishment, and regeneration precedes sanctification. We believe that the order of the ordinances is an important point of Christian doctrine, and itself teaches Christian doctrine. Hence we proclaim it and adhere to it, in our preaching and in our practice. But we do not turn the Lord's Supper into a judgment-seat, or turn the officers of the church into detectives. We teach the truth and expect that the truth will win its way. We are courteous to all who come among us, and expect that they in turn will have the courtesy to respect our convictions and to act accordingly. But there is danger here that we may break from our moorings and drift into indifferentism with regard to the ordinances. The recent advocacy of open church membership is but the logical consequences of a previous concession of open communion. But I am persuaded that this new doctrine is confined to a very few among us.

"There is but one army of the living God, even though there are many divisions. We can emphasize our unity with other Christian bodies, rather than the differences between us. We can regard them as churches of the Lord Jesus, even though they are irregularly constituted."

* * *

Here we see well-meant confusion. The Baptist contention of the past is either right or wrong. Their standpoint in years past was the Scriptural one that there is but one body of Christ—one church, of many members, in many places. Now Dr. Strong tells of "other Christian bodies." Are there other heads to those other "bodies"? The Apostle wrote of "one body," *the church*, and one "head," *the Lord*. (Rom. 12:5) Have matters changed since that inspired record was given us? We think not. Each head and each body must claim to be the Christ; but as there is but one, the claims must be false and the claimants must be deluding themselves.

Evidently Baptists are drifting farther and farther into sectarianism—and that to their injury, though they are disposed to glory in it. The Scriptures denounce Papacy as a false "body" under a false "head"—as being Antichrist or a counterfeit of the true head and his body, the true church. Baptists once saw this point distinctly. Why can they not see, too, that every system or body except *one* must be spurious, must be an imitation of that *one*? And that the head of every such system, whether pope or presbytery or conference or ministerial union,

is a false head over a false or spurious body, and constitutes one of the many antichrists or false Christs which our Lord's great prophecy predicted for the harvest of this Gospel age.—Matt. 24:24.

The difficulty with our Baptist brethren on this subject is their error in confounding *water baptism* with the *real baptism*, and the church whose names are written on earth with the true church, "whose names are written in heaven."—Heb. 12:23; DAWN, Vol. 6, Chap. 10.

BAPTISTS AND THE COMING OF CHRIST

On this subject Dr. Strong's remarks call for our hearty endorsement. He says:—

"The faith in a second coming of Christ has lost its hold upon many Baptists in our day. But it still serves to stimulate and admonish the great body, and we can never dispense with its solemn and mighty influence. Christ comes, it is true, in all Pentecostal revivals and in destructions of Jerusalem, in Reformation movements and in political upheavals. But these are only precursors of another and literal and final return of Christ, to punish the wicked and complete the salvation of his people. That day for which all other days are made will be a joyful day for those who have fought a good fight and have kept the faith. Let us look for and hasten the coming of the day of God. The Jacobites of Scotland never ceased their labors and sacrifices for their king's return. Their passionate devotion to his cause led hundreds of them to exile and death. They never tasted wine without pledging their absent prince;

they never joined in song without renewing their oaths of allegiance. In many a prison cell and on many a battle field they rang out the strain:

"Follow thee, follow thee, wha wadna follow thee?

Lang hast thou lo'ed and trusted us fairly:

Chairlie, Chairlie, wha wadna follow thee?

King o' the Highland hearts, bonnie Prince Chairlie!"

"So they sang, so they invited him, until at last he came. But that longing for the day when Charles should come to his own again was faint and weak compared with the longing of true Christian hearts for the coming of their King. Charles came, only to suffer defeat, and to bring shame to his country. But Christ will come, to put an end to the world's long sorrow, to give triumph to the cause of truth, to bestow everlasting reward upon the faithful.

"Even so, Lord Jesus, come!

Hope of all our hopes the sum,
Take thy waiting people home!

"Long, so long, the groaning earth,
Cursed with war and flood and dearth,
Sighs for its redemption-birth.

"Therefore come, we daily pray,
Bring the resurrection-day,
Wipe creation's curse away!"

FURTHER CONFIRMATION OF OUR CHRONOLOGY

Whenever the point of present truth has been attacked, the result seems to be to bring out its greater strength and beauty. This has happened again, in the matter of the recent questioning of the correctness of the chronology presented in MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. II., referred to in our October 1st issue, page 296.

The diagrams presented herewith and the explanations attached are from three different brethren—two in Glasgow and one in London. Each has peculiarities of its own, yet all show *parallels* additional to those presented in DAWN, Vol. 2, and all serve the one purpose of confirming the chronology presented in that volume, as the only possible and consistent Bible chronology, on which alone all the various lines of prophecy are harmonizable. As stated in DAWN, Vol. II., the Bible Chronol-

ogy presents a sufficiency of difficulties to require *faith that God meant to give us a time measurement*.

The lesson of the accompanying diagrams is that no such *parallels* would be possible were a single one of our prominent dates altered. For instance, the two years' difference between the end of the 6,000 years, 1872 A. D. and the beginning of the antitypical Jubilee period, 1874 A. D., which in DAWN II. we explained as implying that Adam was about two years sinless in Eden, these diagrams show as *necessary* to fill out the measurements. Our date for the beginning of A. D., and the events connected with our Lord's birth and death, are confirmed by these parallels, too. These are one year and three months different from the Bishop Usher dates of our common version Bible, and two years and nine months different from the re-

DIAGRAM NO 1

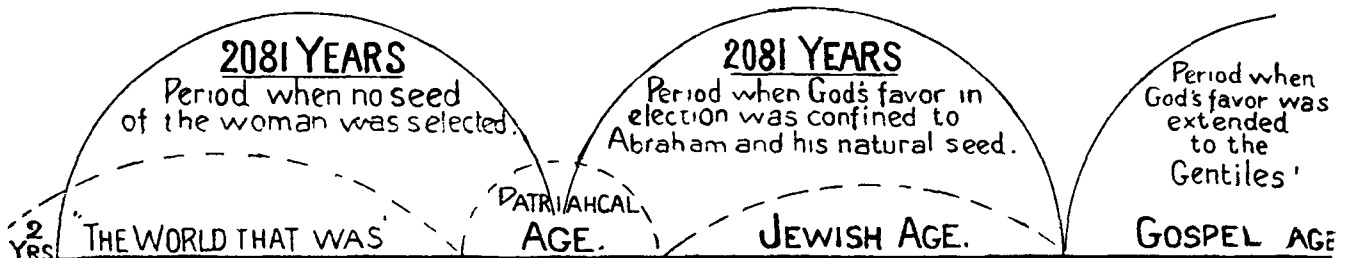
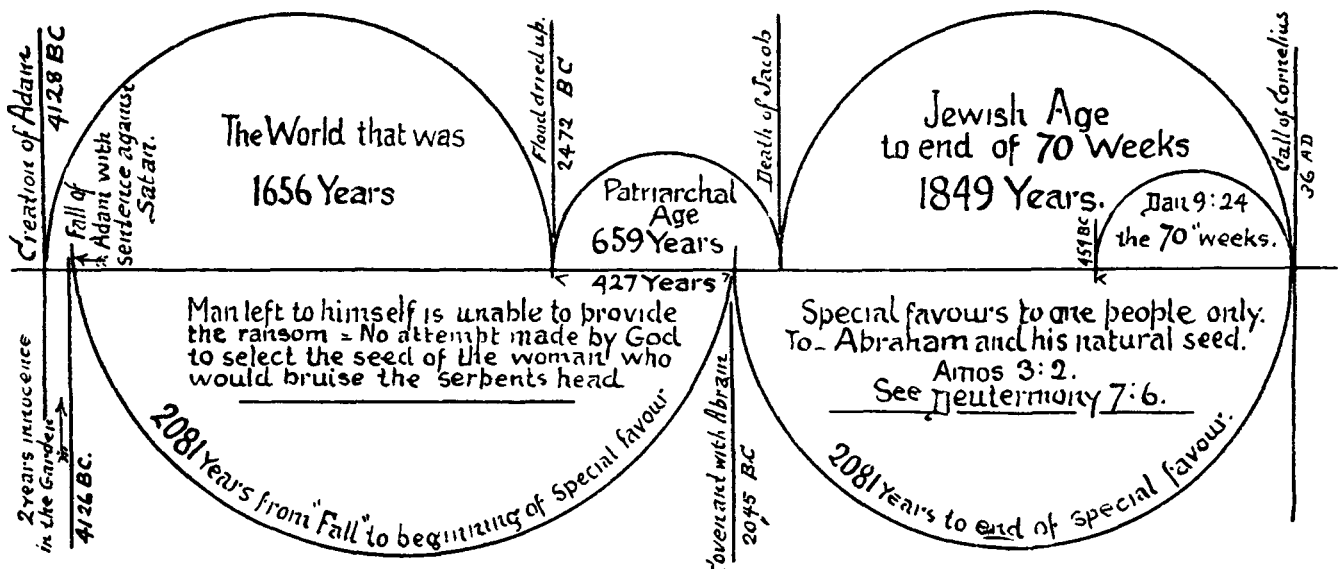


DIAGRAM NO. 2.



vised dates of today's scholarship. This is accomplished by the marking of the year A. D. 36 as the end of the "70 weeks" of Israel's favor and the date when the Gospel reached Cornelius.

* * *

DIAGRAM NO. 1 shows that the period from the time of the Fall to A. D. 36, 4162 years, was marked exactly at its center by the oath-bound covenant made to Abraham, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." This not only corroborates the correctness of our placing of the birth of our Lord, but also the correctness of all the chronology leading up to that date: for it seems incredible almost that such an even division could happen by accident. DIAGRAM NO. 2 is another illustration of the same lesson. See also DAWN, VOL. II.

MATHEMATICAL DEMONSTRATION

(SEE DAWN, VOL. II., PP. 42-54.)

Creation to the Flood.....	1656 years
Patriarchal Age (i. e., Flood to Death of Jacob) }	427 "
Jewish Age to End of Favor, A. D. 36.....	232 "
	1849 "
	4164 "
Less "Innocent Years".....	2 "
	4162 "

The middle of the period, viz., one-half..... 2081 "

I. PERIOD.

Creation to the Flood.....	1656 years
Flood to Covenant.....	427 "
Creation to Covenant.....	2083 "
Less years of innocence.....	2 "
	2081 "

II. PERIOD.

From Abraham to the Law.....	430 years
Israel in the Wilderness.....	40 "
To the division of Canaan.....	6 "
Period of the Judges.....	450 "
Period of the Kings.....	513 "
Period of the Desolation.....	70 "
Period thence to A. D. 1.....	536 "
Period thence to A. D. 36.....	36 "
	2081

DIAGRAM NO. 3.—This diagram presupposes that in the divine plan the day of Adam (Gen. 2:17) and the "day of Christ" were each one thousand years long: as the Apostle declares, "a day with the Lord is a thousand years." Adam's "fall" into death was fully accomplished seventy years before the end of his "day," and presumably Christ will accomplish the full lifting up of Adam and his race (or all of them willing

to obey the righteous conditions necessary) before the end of the millennial day.

This diagram views the Millennium as beginning with the end of "Gentile Times," October, 1914, and shows that the intervening space, 5040 years, is exactly twice "seven times;" and more than this, it marks the turning point as B. C. 606, as well as the ending point A. D. 1914. Does it not appear that the Lord so arranged this matter, and that he has now brought it to our attention, to be distributed to the household of faith for their comfort and encouragement at an opportune time? It surely does. It will be observed also that all of these calculations include the same two years of Edenic purity. The "fall" is kept prominent: everything measures from it. Compare DAWN, Vol. II., chap. 4.

DIAGRAM NO. 4 in some particulars resembles No. 3, yet it is quite different as a whole. It views matters from another Scriptural standpoint, taking A. D. 1874 for the date of the Millennium, as shown by the Jubilee cycles and various other prophecies.—See DAWN, Vol. II., chap. 6, and Vol. III., chap. 5.

Our readers are already familiar with the presentations of this from its middle at 625 B. C. to the right extremity. (DAWN II., p. 185, 186) The new features are at the left of the center: not new in the sense of contradicting or altering anything already seen, but new in the sense of bringing to our attention great harmonies of the divine plan not before observed and which fully corroborate our previous findings.

The last line on the figure is interesting, too, showing the division of the whole period of 7,000 years in its center at 625 B. C., the date of the last typical jubilee ever observed by Israel—just nineteen years before the "seventy years' desolation" of the land, since which they have had no opportunity to observe the jubilee, even had they desired to do so, since their land has always been under the suzerain control of alien governments. How grand the thought that the grand antitypical cycle did not fail—that it counted until its fulfillment in A. D. 1874, and that there the real Jubilee of jubilees actually began—that the Lord's people are even now blessing the Jubilee Trumpets, announcing the "time is at hand" and the change of possession is due October, 1914. Do not these dove-tailing figures prove (as nearly as faith could expect proof) that we are right respecting the chronology on which these matters are based—this one proving the date 625 B. C., as the previous one, No. 3, proved the date 606 B. C.?

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in his excellent Word."

There is nothing forced or fanciful about these diagrams, their deductions and conclusions. They are almost cold in their matter-of-factness. Yet how meaningful and soul-cheering to us who believe and appreciate their significance. They come, too, at a time when "science, falsely so-called," is making special attacks on the chronology of God's Word, and making those attacks applicable to the Bible as a whole—at a time when thousands at our side are falling into skepticism. Let us give

reverent thanks to the Giver of all good, and more and more sound the praises of him who has "called us out of darkness into his marvelous light," and more and more appreciate and use our privileges as his ambassadors and servants in handing forth the "meat in due season" to all the members of "the household of faith."

DIAGRAM NO. 3.

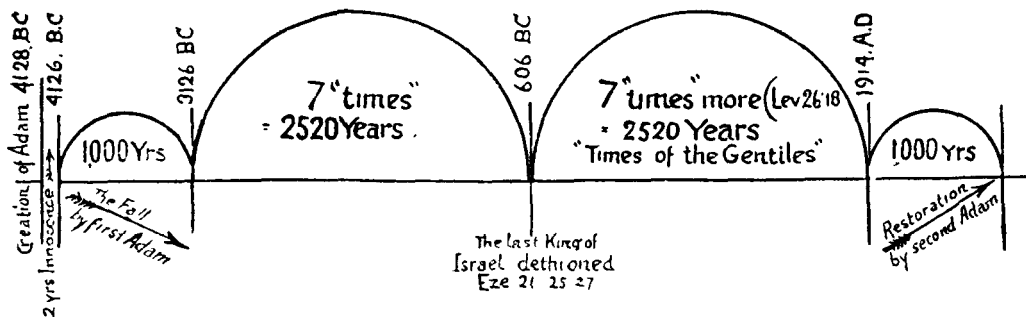
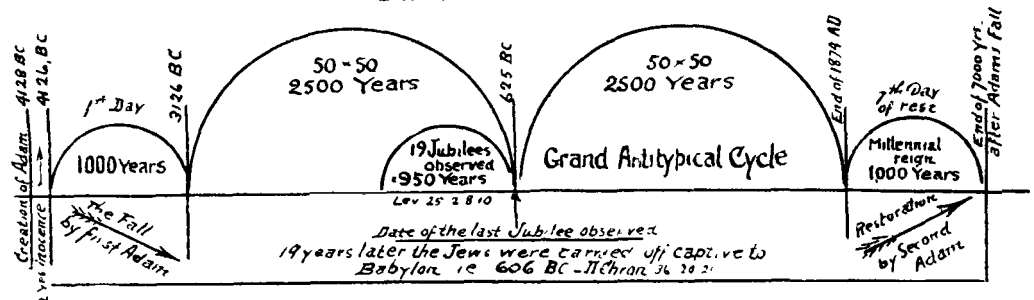


DIAGRAM NO. 4



"LIKE UNTO THE ANGELS"

Amongst the Jews were three particular parties. The largest and in every way most important of these were known as Pharisees, who believed in a future life, to be attained by a resurrection at some future time, for which they waited. Second to these in importance, yet very much smaller, were the Sadducees, who boasted of their intellectual acumen, claiming that a man when he died had no preëminence above a brute, except in the honors done to his corpse—disbelieving in a resurrection or future life of any kind, disbelieving also that there are angelic beings of a spirit order, holding extremely materialistic views, believing nothing that they could not appreciate with their natural senses. The third party, Essenes, accepted the heathen teachings of Plato, disbelieving in a resurrection, and claiming that when a man died he was more alive than before. This sect or party, although mentioned by Josephus a little later than our Lord's time, was so small in the days of our Lord and the apostles that they are not so much as mentioned once in the New Testament.

The Pharisees, the numerous party, the orthodox at that time, were our Lord's chief opponents in argument and otherwise; yet, as the records show, they uniformly failed to entrap him, though their ablest men were put to the fore with this end in view—that they might show our Lord's teachings to be illogical or unreasonable to some degree, and thus to break his influence with the common people; or, failing to do this, that they might catch him in his words and have opportunity for a charge against him before the Roman governor, and thus bring political pressure to bear to stop his ministry. It was on such an occasion, after the discomfiture of the Pharisees, that the Sadducees stepped to the front with a question which they had every confidence would confuse our Lord in the presence of the people, and not only show his position to be illogical, but gain a feather for their own caps as philosophers and teachers superior, not only to Jesus, but also to the Pharisees.

WHOSE WIFE SHALL SHE BE?

The Jewish Law provided certain inheritances for each son, and it was the ambition of each to perpetuate his own family. This the law inculcated, by providing that upon the death of any man childless, his brother, if he had one, should perpetuate his inheritance for him by taking the widow to wife. The skillfully arranged question of the Sadducees supposed seven brothers, the first of whom married died childless, the wife being taken by his brother, and so likewise until the entire seven had been husbands to the one wife. Lastly the wife died. Which of these seven could claim the wife in the resurrection? The question seemed to show an absurdity in the doctrine of a future life, implying that there would be such a muddle that all eternity would not straighten it out.

Our Lord's answer was, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, neither the power of God." That is to say, the difficulty of the Sadducees arose from the fact that they had not understood the Scriptures relating to the future life beyond the resurrection, neither did they give proper weight to the power of God, which is quite able to surmount every difficulty that could be imagined. Our Lord might have stopped there, giving the not unreasonable inference that his hearers lacked the proper knowledge of the subject to permit them to clearly comprehend anything he might say about it. But rather than appear to avoid the question, and, indeed, with a view to giving light upon the subject to us who would come afterward, our Lord explained the matter, saying, "The children [people] of this world [age] marry and are given in marriage; but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world [age] and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage."

True, the glorified church will not marry, but there is no reference here to the church class, the bride class. The question did not refer to saints, but to any ordinary Jews under the Law, to whom the illustration might be in any degree applicable.

Nothing in the illustration implied that either the woman or any of her husbands were followers of the Lord or in any sense of the word "saints." Our Lord's answer should be understood from this standpoint, therefore. He did not say, My disciples will neither marry nor be given in marriage, nor that those who are faithful in following me will have such experiences, but he made his answer as broad as the Sadducees had made their question: he made the answer applicable to all Jews. True, also, the Greek article occurs before the word resurrection in the question and also in the answer, but this would be no positive proof that a special or chief resurrection was meant except two resurrections were referred to in contrast. Indeed the distinction between the resurrection of the church and that of the world was not yet taught by our Lord—was not set forth until after Pentecost. Hence the Sadducees could not know to refer to it. They did probably know

that our Lord had awakened some dead ones, as had the prophets of old, and so probably referred to the anastasis of the future as in contrast and distinction from any temporary awakening of the present time.

DID THE RANSOM SECURE FULL RESURRECTION?

We ask then, What did our Lord mean by limiting his answer to "they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that age and the resurrection"? Will not the whole world be accounted worthy to obtain full resurrection? Did not our Lord's death purchase full resurrection for all the race? We answer, No. Our Lord's death was the propitiation, the satisfaction, whereby the sins of the whole world shall be cancelled, and whereby, therefore, the whole world may be awakened from the sleep of death and brought out of the great prison-house, the tomb. But such awakening and coming forth is with a view to their enlightenment, that they may all come to the knowledge of the truth to the intent that by such knowledge and by obedience to it they might be saved, recovered, delivered completely out of all weaknesses and imperfections—brought gradually step by step, up, up, up, out of sin and death-conditions to full perfection and life-conditions; and this condition of absolute perfection or life from the dead is resurrection "out from among the dead" who will refuse to use those opportunities.

The raising up will proceed during the thousand years from the time of the awakening of the individual until he shall have attained to the full perfection of manhood—all that was lost in Adam. Then he will be resurrected—that will constitute his resurrection. Thus he will attain unto "that world," that perfect dispensation which God has designed shall be the ultimate and everlasting condition of all who love and obey him. But some will be awakened from the tomb who will not be accounted worthy to attain such a lifting up to perfection, mental, moral and physical, because of their failure to respond to the blessed privileges and influences of that time.

Now, as respects those who, at the close of the Millennial age, will have demonstrated their obedience to the Lord, and who shall be accounted worthy of that perfect state, and to be made perfect themselves, lifted clear out of death—such will neither marry nor be given in marriage. The Lord does not say what will be the intermediate conditions during the Millennial age, and this leaves us to infer that mankind and womankind, being awakened from the tomb in precisely the same conditions in which they went into it, will possess the same sex distinctions as at the present time. What will be the regulations of that time we are not told, but we have confidence in the Lord that he will be abundantly able to direct the course of mankind wisely for their benefit, instruction and uplift.

The end of the uplifting process, the end of the Millennial age, will mark a change in the human constitution by gradual development, a change so great that by that time those who will be ready to pass beyond the Millennial age into the everlasting conditions will not only be perfect in the sense and degree that Adam was perfect before he sinned, but also before mother Eve was taken from him and made a separate being. That is to say, sex conditions will gradually pass away, and be no more in mankind, even as it is not found in angels, and as it was not in man before the separation into sexes was effected in Eden for the purpose of propagating the race and filling the earth.

SEXUAL DISTINCTIONS TEMPORARY

It will be remembered that during the first thousand years after the fall, not only was life much longer than at present, but births were much less frequent than now; and so we presume that during the Millennial age the propagation of the species will gradually diminish until toward its close it will finally stop, mankind gradually losing the sex functions. Sex will no longer be necessary; for man will no longer be alone, as he was at first, to need a companion, for the whole earth will then be filled with perfect beings, and all the wicked, the incorrigible, will be destroyed. It is to this we understand that our Lord referred, saying, "Neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being children of the resurrection." As the angels do not die, neither will the perfected human beings die.

Eternal life is the gift of God through Christ for all of Adam's race who would receive it upon conditions of absolute obedience, and the test which will take place in the close of the Millennial age (Rev. 20:7-9) will guarantee that none remain to pass beyond into the perfect dispensation except those who, like the angels, having been tested, will be in no danger of falling, and will therefore die no more. Those who pass that inspection at the close of the Millennial age will be accepted of the Father as his children, and the intermediary or mediatorial kingdom of Christ over them will terminate. They will become God's children by the resurrection—by the raising

up processes of the Millennial age, administered through the glorified Christ—the same that elsewhere is called “the resurrection by judgments,” because the rewards and penalties of obedience or disobedience will follow promptly, having the effect of constraining to righteousness and uplifting from sin-and-death conditions.

In applying this Scripture thus to the world of mankind, and its raising out of death conditions during the Millennium and its attainment to life everlasting and to the condition where there will be no further marrying, we have no desire to imply that there will be marrying in the glorified church. On the contrary, the church is married to the Lord. As old creatures they are dead; as new creatures they never will be married to any but the Lord; and when in the resurrection they come forth to glory, honor and immortality it will be to conditions like to their Lord, “far above angels, principalities and powers, and every name that is named.”

WHAT MOSES SHOWED AT THE BUSH

Continuing to level his argument against the Sadducees—continuing to prove the general resurrection of mankind, and not merely the resurrection of the Church—our Lord adds, “Now that the dead are [to be] raised even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, for he is not a God of the dead but of the living; for all live unto him.” Had there been no provision in God’s plan for the raising of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, he never would have spoken of himself as being their God, but rather would have treated them as non-existent, having no being, no God, and never to have any. Likewise the fact that God speaks of the coming blessing through Abraham upon all the families of the earth proves that from the divine standpoint, although the billions of earth are dead, they all live unto God—in his purpose, in his plan, in his arrangement, to be accomplished and fulfilled through Jesus during the Millennial age.

SHALL WE KNOW EACH OTHER THERE?

The questions are frequently asked us, What knowledge of one another will there be in the next life? and, Will there be communication between the heavenly and the earthly classes?

We reply that the acquaintance of the present time will be prolonged into the next life, and revive and increase. As for those who will attain the spirit plane of being, viz., the bride, the overcoming class, and “the virgins, her companions, which follow her,” otherwise in Scripture known as the “great company,” all being upon the spirit plane will be able to see and know each other, because in those respects they will be alike, spirit beings. True, the bride class, with her Lord Jesus and the Father, will all be on the divine plane, while the great company, like the angels, will be on a lower plane of spirit being. But all spirit beings may see and know and have intercourse with each other—those on the divine plane being superior not only in rank and position but also in that they will possess inherent life, immortality, while the others will possess a life that will be eternal because of its continuous supply.

The world of mankind will know each other as they do now

—some by previous acquaintance and some by introduction. Thus, none of the ancient worthies who will be present as perfect men will be known by any of the world today, and they would need, therefore, some kind of introduction, either by divine miracles attesting them and their authority or by some other means. It may be easily enough imagined how the world will gain introduction one to the other, just as such introductions are now accomplished amongst men. Similar introductions will doubtless be necessary to the glorified saints beyond the veil, since the majority of them have never seen the Lord, the Apostles, nor each other.

COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN SPIRITS AND HUMANS

Coming now to the last feature, we answer that undoubtedly there will be communication between the heavenly and the earthly beings, not only throughout the Millennial age but subsequently. To our understanding the Father and the heavenly angels will have nothing to do with mankind during the Millennium, until the delivery up of the kingdom of God’s dear Son. But there will be communication between the kingdom class, the church, with Jesus at its head, and the world of mankind under their supervision and uplifting influences. Looking back into the past, we see that God communicated with Abraham, and numerous of his natural descendants, through spirit beings, who assumed human form for the purpose. But we are not to expect such manifestations in the future, because we find in the divine arrangement a different preparation.

We find that the ancient worthies as a class have been prepared of God in advance to serve this very purpose; that they, rewarded with human perfection, might serve as the intermediaries between the spirit kingdom and the world of mankind. As it is written, “The law shall go forth from Mount Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” The instruction will go from the spiritual kingdom to the earthly princes, its representatives, and be communicated from these princes to all the families of the earth, with full power and authority in the name of the kingdom to enforce every regulation, to reward the well-doers and to punish all who fail of obedience.

With the end of the Millennial age, wilful evil-doers having been cut off in the second death, the world of mankind will be, like the angels, possessed of lasting life, and without sex. They will be all perfect men, like to and equal to the condition of the ancient worthies during the Millennium. When the kingdom of Christ shall be delivered to the Father we believe that a similar communication will be established between the perfect men and the heavenly courts that was in vogue before the first disobedience and its penalty came upon men. True, we do not know very particularly about the character of the communion which prevailed in Edenic times, but it was sufficient for every purpose, we may be sure, and such will be the communion of the future between the perfect God and his earthly image, the perfect man—similar communion to that which during the Millennial age will take place between the glorified church and its earthly representatives, the ancient worthies.

“THEM THAT HONOR ME I WILL HONOR”

2 CHRONICLES 29:18-31.—DECEMBER 4.

Hezekiah was reckoned in the Lord’s sight as one of the three most acceptable kings who ever sat upon the throne of Judah—David and Josiah being the other two. (2 Kings 18:5) His case was the more remarkable in that he was the son of King Ahaz, one of the most reprehensible kings that ever occupied that throne—one so disesteemed that he was not even buried in the sepulchers of the kings. King Ahaz had fostered idolatry in its worst forms, and under his reign the kingdom had sunk to a very low condition every way. At the age of twenty-five years Hezekiah, on his father’s death, had succeeded to the throne, and his entire reign was one of reformation and indicated a hearty desire to please the Lord.

The secret of the difference between the father and the son is found in the fact that the mother was a godly woman, and no doubt this is one particular reason why her name, Abijah, is mentioned in the Scriptures. The name signifies, “My father is Jehovah,” and implies that one or both of her parents were reverent and God-fearing. How she came to be the wife of so ignoble a king we do not surely know, but evidently the irreverence and idolatry of her husband had no contaminating influence upon her mind. This is intimated by the name given to her son Hezekiah, which signifies, “Strength of Jehovah.” In this we have another illustration of the Apostle’s words, “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband, else were your children unholy.” (1 Cor. 7:14) So far as parentage is concerned

the intimation is that the Lord is pleased to recognize the child as the offspring of the believing parent, and thus it comes under divine providence and care, similar to that of its believing parent, up to the age of discretion.

What a lesson we have here respecting the power of a mother for good. True, in this case as a wife she did not succeed in influencing her husband to divine reverence and righteousness, but she evidently did exercise a moulding, controlling influence in the formation of her son’s character. The influence of the wife and mother rightly exercised is very highly to be appreciated, but some, failing to properly value their privileges and opportunities in the home, have launched forth in public efforts to the neglect of home duties—a serious mistake.

CLEANSING THE TEMPLE

The lesson recounts the opening of the Temple and the cleansing of its various parts, which apparently required sixteen days. This probably included the restoration of certain brass plates and borders which we are informed King Ahaz had removed from the altar and tables for use in other places; but sixteen days would be none too long for a proper cleansing of the building anyway. We recall that history says that before the reign of Queen Elizabeth, while Great Britain was under the power of Rome, St. Paul’s Cathedral in London was used as a kind of market place, donkeys with burdens passing up and down the aisles (previously and subsequently used for

worship), huckstering and servant hiring, etc., being a part of the regular routine. Evidently it is very easy for any people to lose its reverence for God and holy things, and such a loss is not only to be deprecated in a nation, but particularly in the hearts of individuals, for with the loss of reverence goes one of the mental qualities most helpful to a moral and religious life.

The restoration of the Temple to the service of God was celebrated by King Hezekiah and the rulers of the city and the princes of the nation with great zeal, for indeed the whole nation seems in some measure to have come to a realization of its low condition and need of an uplift. Our lesson proceeds to describe a special sin offering for the sins of the people. The fact that seven bullocks, seven rams, etc., were sacrificed instead of one of each would merely mean that it was to intensify the matter, seven being a symbol of perfection or completeness.

This was not the regular atonement day sacrifice, for it was in April instead of in September, but we may be sure that no atonement day sacrifice had been offered in the Temple for many years, so thoroughly had the king and the nation under his guidance rejected the Lord and the gracious arrangements he had made for their forgiveness and fellowship with him. The proper date for sin atonement having passed, it was no doubt proper enough that the sacrifices should be offered in the middle of the year rather than wait for the beginning of the new year; but the atonement effected would not be good for twelve months, but merely for the remainder of the year in which it was offered. The generous spirit of Hezekiah is exhibited in his instruction to the priest that the same atonement should be effected not only for the people of the kingdom of Judah but also for those of the ten tribes which had separated from them.

SPIRITUAL TEMPLE CLEANSING

Spiritual lessons for the church may be drawn from this narrative. The antitype would not be the cleansing and care of church buildings, chapels, cathedrals, etc., although it is certainly proper enough that any building used for the Lord's worship should be respected and kept in decency and in order. The antitype of the Jewish temple is the spiritual temple of which the Apostle speaking says, "Whose temple ye are if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." Applying the lesson in an individual manner it would mean that if any of the Lord's people have in any measure fallen into worldliness, sin, the worship of Mammon—idolatry—the neglect of the worship and service of the true God in any measure or degree, there should be first of all a cleansing to the best of our ability, a reformation, and secondly an appeal to God for at-one-ment with him, for forgiveness of sins. It is not necessary that we should offer bullocks, goats and rams, but it is necessary that in such a reformation, such a preparation for divine forgiveness, we should come before the Lord in the merit of the great

sacrifice for sins which he has appointed and which already has been made—"once for all."

Applying the lesson on a larger scale to the church as a whole, we look back in history and see the time that the temple of God was completely given over to idolatry, when the "continual sacrifice" was set aside, and masses, fresh sacrifices, "abominations" in God's sight were substituted, and even the form of godliness was almost obsolete and supplanted by heathen festivals and carnivals and image worship, wholly misunderstanding the divinely arranged faith worship. In the Lord's providence a great reformation came in the days of Luther, Melancthon and others, and this cleansing of the Lord's temple is still in progress, because, alas, all of the debris of antichrist has not been removed.

A PART IN THE SERVICE FOR EACH

Much of superstition, false doctrines and mummery still remains. With many the "mass" is still revered, but, thank God, with the few the precious blood shed once for all for the remission of sins has come back again into a proper appreciation. Let all of the royal priesthood, the consecrated followers of the great High Priest of our profession, be on the alert to do all in their power for the cleansing of the temple of every defilement of error, and let all of the antitypical Levites, the household of faith, lend willing hands in this same direction, co-operating for the one great end which at last will be secured—not by our efforts, but by him who declared that his influence will be as fuller's soap and as a refiner's fire to purify all of the sons of Levi—to purify all of the true believers, that ultimately they may be acceptable sharers in the heavenly kingdom and its glorious work of uplifting all the people and shedding forth the blessings of the great atonement upon all the families of the earth.

The work of reestablishing the true religion recounted in our lesson was not to be accomplished in a doleful manner, but with joy and rejoicing. The priests and Levites proceeded with the various departments of the work, and musical instruments and the psalms of David expressed the joy of those who rejoiced in the new order of things. The king and the people bowed before the Lord, giving the worship of their hearts to the invisible one instead of to idols and the work of their own hands. King Hezekiah, evidently addressing the people, said, "Now have ye consecrated yourselves unto the Lord: come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the Lord. And the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank offerings, and as many as were of willing heart brought burnt offerings."

Thus it is with the Lord's truly consecrated people today. Rejoicing to be free from the errors and sins of the past, they rejoice to worship the Lord with thank offerings and praise and true worship. Let this be more and more the attitude of those who have been blessed of the Lord with the opening of the eyes of their understanding and a return to his favor.

THE CAPTIVITY OF EPHRAIM

2 KINGS 17:6-18.—DEC. 11.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"The face of the Lord is against them that do evil."—1 Pet. 3:12.

Ephraim was the name of the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, as Judah was the name given to the two-tribe kingdom of the same people. Our lesson recounts how, at the divinely appointed time, Ephraim was utterly overwhelmed by the kingdom of Assyria. The people, deprived of weapons, although otherwise well treated, were deported to the lands under Assyrian control, while other peoples conquered by the Assyrians were settled in the land of Israel. The object of the conqueror evidently was to break the national spirit and reduce the various peoples conquered to a kind of serfdom, the better to collect taxes or revenues for the Assyrian treasury. Probably the people were not worse off as respected their material welfare, for they were not treated as slaves, but as emigrants and settlers.

For many centuries Ephraim, the ten-tribe kingdom, especially after Solomon's death, was extremely perverse; not more degraded, we may presume, than the surrounding nations, but their perversion was more wicked, more reprehensible, because of greater privileges, blessings, knowledge and opportunities which the Lord had granted to them as the posterity of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the inheritors of the great oath-bound covenant made to Abraham and confirmed to Isaac and Jacob. One is amazed, in reading of the Lord's dealings with Ephraim and Judah, to note their general tendency toward idolatry, and this in spite of the divine chastisements, corrections, etc., which evidently influenced only the few. In thinking of these matters we are to remember that the surrounding na-

tions were still more grossly steeped in idolatry and its lustful orgies, practised in the name of worship. These other nations were not specially chastised for idolatry as was Israel, but were allowed to practically take the course they chose, as the Apostle explains in Rom. 1:28: God gave them over to a reprobate mind and to doing those things which were not proper because they had not wished to retain him in their minds.

The captivity of Ephraim should be viewed from this same standpoint. It was God's abandonment of the ten-tribe kingdom, his permission for them to have their way, and henceforth be treated of him as the heathen—without special chastisement. It was in this sense and in this sense only that those tribes were "lost." Located in various parts of Assyria they gradually assimilated with the population surrounding them, and lost identity as Israelites, inter-marrying with their neighbors.

It was because of their failure to appreciate him, because of hankering after false gods and false worship and the more or less mingling of these false worships with the true worship, that God withdrew his favor. It is pointed out that God did not cast them off without reproving them, chastising them and sending them messages by prophets and seers. To the seers the Lord gave prophetic visions and messages built upon these, and by the prophets he sent them instructions and warnings, encouragements and threatenings. Elijah and Elisha had been amongst them, and later Jonah and Amos and Hosea. Through all these the Lord had warned and cautioned. Through Hosea the Lord had made especially kind and loving appeals to them.

as a father to children—"How can I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I make thee as Admah?"—a desolate room. Again we read, "Ephraim feedeth on the wind"—"I will heal thy backslidings, I will love thee freely." These messages had indeed some effect upon a few individuals in the nation, but did not affect the people as a whole, neither did it lead to a reformation. As our lesson declares (vs. 14), "They would not hear, but hardened their neck like to the neck of their fathers. . . And they rejected his statutes and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified unto them; and they followed vanity," etc. Hardness of neck here is a figure of speech doubtless drawn from the stiffness of neck of a yoke of unruly bullocks—unmanageable, self-willed, resenting every effort to turn them in the right way.

The wrong course of the people is further declared in the statement that they not only worshiped false gods but made their sons and daughters pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord. They became the slaves of their passions and self-deceptions, and were so misled as the evil spirits as to consider this burning of their own children as acceptable sacrifices to false gods. It was well that all pretensions on their part to be people of God should cease; it was well that they should be removed to new scenes amongst strangers, where under new conditions their minds would be otherwise engaged, even though it should be an entire alienation from God.

VIEWS FROM THE DIVINE STANDPOINT

There is but one standpoint from which the history of Israel can be properly understood and appreciated: namely, Israel's inheritance in the Abrahamic Covenant. All of God's dealings with the children of Jacob were with a view to a selection of the two seeds of Abraham—a natural seed and a spiritual one. To this end their national experiences conspired—to find in that nation certain noble, loyal, reverential souls, such as David, Jonathan, and all the holy prophets, and to prepare that people by disciplines, prunings, etc., to be the people to whom Messiah would first present himself and among whom he would find a goodly "remnant" prepared to be his followers.

The separation of the ten tribes from the two tribes at the death of Solomon was an important step in this selection. The Lord had distinctly stated in advance that the Law-giver whom he had promised should come out of Judah, and hence any Israelites indeed in the ten-tribe kingdom must have looked with longing interest toward Judah as the ultimate end of their hopes—the Messiah, and the fulfilment through him of the Abrahamic Covenant. Throughout the varying history of these two kingdoms the greater religious faith and zeal was always to be found in Judah, and gradually many of the more religious in Ephraim removed to Judah and identified themselves therewith, because of the greater religious privileges and blessings there enjoyed. Thus Judah eventually represented the cream of the nation, and the records show that not only Hezekiah, the king of Judah, was favorably disposed toward his brethren of Ephraim and made them welcome to the religious assemblies, but that other kings, his predecessors, had done similarly. Thus seen the captivity of Ephraim was merely the rejection of the skim milk of the nation, and as we have already seen was really not at all to their injury so far as temporal interests were concerned. It was their cutting off from divine favor in respect to the Abrahamic Covenant that was specially regrettable.

When a good while afterward the kingdom of Judah was overthrown and its people similarly taken into captivity and similarly scattered amongst the nations composing the Babylonish empire it was merely a carrying out of a further development of the divine plan. By this last stroke the Lord would put away all the more grovelling, sensual and worldly-minded of his people. The desolation of the land for seventy years permitted all who would to forget the original covenant of which they were heirs, permitted them to intermarry with the nations around them if they would, permitted them to settle and prosper and be content in their new homes; and then the Lord in his providence opened up a way for all who were not satisfied with the good earthly portion they were enjoying to return to their own land—a desolated land.

We can readily see that none of them would come back under such conditions except those who had strong faith in the Lord and in the original oath-bound covenant made to Abraham and confirmed to Isaac and Jacob and the nation. All without faith and all of weak faith, all lacking in zeal, would surely find it much to their advantage every way to remain where they were. And so we find that only 55,000 out of all the millions of those two nations cared to return to the land of promise—for in the Lord's providence the proclamation of

King Cyrus permitted all Israelites of every tribe to return to their own land. The faithful people who did return were the very cream of that nation, and their successors, to whom our Lord Jesus presented himself as king, represented, in many respects, the noblest and best people in the world. We should not be misunderstood: while the majority of Ephraim and Judah commingled with the heathen, others preserved their identity as Israelites without returning to Palestine, just as we see the Israelites today in every part of the world preserving their religious institutions and faith. But then each preserved his tribal identity, whereas now all tribal lines are lost and obliterated. It is of these that the Apostle sometimes spoke as "our twelve tribes scattered abroad"—not lost but scattered, as today. The only ones lost are those who have become Gentiles, by utter disregard of the peculiar characteristics of the nation, of which by divine arrangement circumcision was one.

Our lesson viewed from this standpoint is profitable. It shows us that God is working out his great and wonderful plan. Those favored in that plan are not coerced, though graciously dealt with and appealed to; neither does their neglect or rejection of divine favor estop the development of the divine plan.

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform."

ANALOGIES IN SPIRITUAL ISRAEL

We may reasonably expect analogies in spiritual Israel, and we find them. The first epoch of the church's history in the days of the apostles was quickly followed at their death by the great "falling away" from the faith and simplicity of the original establishment; chastisements followed, persecutions, etc., and finally the great majority went into captivity to the world—to Babylon. To these the worship of images and shrines and pictures and the offering of incense and burning of holy candles were associated with a great false sacrifice—the "sacrifice of the mass"—the "abomination that maketh desolate."

Gradually the Lord separated from that system of confusion and error the few who were spiritual Israelites indeed. Protestantism thus gradually grew, and in some respects represented more nearly than did the Greek and Roman churches the true hopes and prospects of the Christian; and yet in Protestantism much was found that was reprehensible in God's sight, many who had only a form of godliness without the power, but some—a proportionately larger number than in Papacy—were found at heart loyal to the Lord and desirous of knowing his will and plan.

These dealings with nominal spiritual Israel for the past eighteen centuries are gradually separating to the Lord an overcoming class and preparing a remnant for him in his second presence. The Reformation movement gathered out of Papacy the majority of the loyal souls indeed at that time: and now in the harvest time of this age the ripe wheat is being garnered from "all Israel," from Catholicism as well as Protestantism, though because of previous siftings, etc., much the larger proportion, as might be expected, will be gathered from Protestantism—Israelites indeed in whom there is no guile.

"KEEP YOURSELVES FROM IDOLS"

The Apostles' words, "Keep yourselves from idols," are not by any means meaningless to spiritual Israel. All around us we see idolatry—not on the same low plane practised in olden times, but idolatry nevertheless. Some worship the idol of wealth, others at the shrine of fame, and in a general sense the spirit of worldliness is swallowing up the time and talent and influence of the civilized world, which professedly claims to be Christendom—Christ's kingdom—spiritual Israel. As natural Israel had its groves and totem-posts, some plain and some carved, so many spiritual Israelites today have for their totem posts the various creeds of the various denominations set up in the past. To these the masses bow with reverent thoughtlessness, largely neglecting the Almighty One and the Word of his testimony, which rebukes all such misrepresentations of the divine character and plan.

We have not today in nominal Christendom a literal Moloch of brass, heated red hot by internal fires, with arms open to receive the children to his embrace, as ancient Israel had, but we have instead a Moloch on a much larger scale—a much worse misrepresentation of the only true God, whose character is wisdom, justice, love and power. We have today in the minds of people, revered by many, mental imaginations of a god red hot with the flames of hell or purgatory, and visions of millions agonizing in his embrace. How terrible the thought! How God-dishonoring! How manifestly the work of the Adversary and totally contrary to the gracious messages which the Lord has so repeatedly sent, not only through the prophets of old but also through his Son and through the apostles, "speaking peace through Jesus Christ," and assuring us of his love, as