

Timely Greetings, Vol. 1, Nos. 23-26

Description



THE FATE OF ASSYRIA, AND THE TRIUMPH OF THE CHURCH

THOUGHT FOR MEDITATION AND PRAYER

We shall read from "The Mount of Blessing," page 180, paragraph one. The reading is based on the scripture which says, "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye?"

M.B., pg. 180 – "Even the sentence, 'Thou that judgest doest the same things,' does not reach the magnitude of his sin who presumes to criticize and condemn his brother.... When he thinks he has detected a flaw in the character or the life, he is exceedingly zealous in trying to point it out; but Jesus declares that the very trait of character developed in doing this un-Christlike work, is, in comparison with the fault criticized, as a beam in proportion to a mote. It is one's own lack of the spirit of forbearance and love that leads him to make a world of an atom.... According to the figure that our Saviour uses, he who indulges a censorious spirit is guilty of greater sin than is the one he accuses; for he not only commits the same sin, but adds to it conceit and censoriousness."

Satan is doing his level best to make us transgress in this respect so that we lose out eternally. God has delegated no one to be policing another. Only God through His prophets is to reprove sin, but never to use force of any kind.

Shall we kneel now, and pray for a realization that our duty is not to criticize others or to magnify their faults, but to speak and practice the Truth? Further than that, Brother, Sister, we

need not go. The rest is up to our audiences and associates. Let them decide for themselves what is best for both soul and body. Truth need not be poked down the throat.

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THE FATE OF ASSYRIA, AND THE TRIUMPH OF THE CHURCH

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,
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SABBATH, JANUARY 11, 1947
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Let us turn to Zephaniah 3, and begin with the first verse.

Zeph. 3:1 – “Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city!”

The antecedent of the pronoun “her” is found in the thirteenth verse of the preceding chapter. In it is seen that the “city” here pointed out is Nineveh, the capital city of ancient Assyria. Now to ascertain whether this Nineveh is actually the capital city of ancient Assyria or of some other Assyria, we shall study the remaining verses of the chapter.

Verse 2 – “She obeyed not the Voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the Lord; she drew not near to her God.”

This verse points out the fact that the city and nation here mentioned had the privilege of hearing the voice of Inspiration, of knowing God’s Truth, but has failed to take heed – received not correction, trusted not in the Lord, drew not near to her God.

Verse 3 – “Her princes within her are roaring lions; 24 her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow.”

Her princes, being like roaring lions, must be frightful persons who evidently think “might makes right.” Her judges are, as it were, evening wolves; that is, they are in business, not to execute judgment, justice, and righteousness, but to catch and tear, to fill their den with prey although they may have more than they know what to do with. “They gnaw not the bones till the morrow.”

Verse 4 – “Her prophets are light and treacherous persons: her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law.”

In the language of today this verse would read, “Her teachers are light-hearted, not serious and sober-minded; they are trifling; they are of no account; they are treacherous persons. Her ministers, rather than having kept the church clean, have polluted it, and have done violence to

the law" (have declared It void).

Thus far is seen that the Assyria of this chapter represents a people who have been well instructed in the things of God, the law and the sanctuary. But instead of obeying the Lord and ruling justly and righteously, they have greatly transgressed, have gone down into sin as deep as any people can possibly go.

Verse 5 – "The just Lord is in the midst thereof; He will not do iniquity: every morning doth He bring His judgment to light, He faileth not; but the unjust knoweth no shame."

?5

In view of the fact that God is in the midst of them, they must be well informed in the things of God, well aware that in due season He makes known to them His judgment. In view of all these, the only possible conclusion one can come to, is that God's church must be in their midst.

Verses 6-8 – "I have cut off the nations: their towers are desolate; I made their streets waste, that none passeth by: their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant. I said, Surely thou wilt fear Me, thou wilt receive instruction; so their dwelling should not be cut off, howsoever I punished them: but they rose early, and corrupted all their doings. Therefore wait ye upon Me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for My determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them Mine indignation, even all My fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy."

The Lord Himself warns that He has cut off nations, that He has made their towers desolate and their streets waste, that He has destroyed their cities and has left no inhabitants in them. He points out that all this He did as an object lesson for future good, so that they as a nation might fear Him and receive instruction, that their dwellings not be cut off. But in spite of these examples, they rise early and corrupt all their doings. So it is that at long last the Lord arises to the prey, gathers the nations, assembles the kingdoms, and Assyria gets her punishment.

From this we see that the Assyria under discussion exists in the time of the end, the time in which the ?6 great and dreadful day of the Lord takes place. This Assyria, therefore, is an antitype of ancient Assyria just as the Babylon of Revelation 17 and 18 is an antitype of ancient Babylon.

Assyria, charges Inspiration, is a rejoicing city that dwells carelessly, that says in her heart, "I am, and there is none beside me." Zeph. 2:15.

At this point let us pause a moment and summarize the characteristics by which this modern Assyria is to be identified. (1) As man looks at things, she is so great that there is none like her. She is well instructed in the things of God. (2) She is oppressive, a hard ruling nation. (3) She has polluted the sanctuary and has declared the law of God void. (4) She has piled up wealth by going after it as an evening wolf goes after its prey. (5) She harbors the church of God. (6) She exists in the time the Lord is to manifest His power and destroy all the wicked nations. (7) She is an Assyria-like nation, widespread, a nation of conquests.

There is but one people under the sun that answers to all these descriptions, and that people is, of course, the English-speaking people, in whose midst is the church, and from whose midst the Gospel and the Bible flow out to all nations. As clear as language can make it, the burden of the prophet Zephaniah is for the English-speaking Christian world.

God is now saying to Assyria's capital city, "Indeed, you are doing all these abominations, but you will not thus continue long. The time is at hand." Put a stop to your absurdities.

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Verse 9 – "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent."

Inspiration for certainty declares that after Assyria receives her punishment, and after the wicked are taken out of his church, then will the Gospel be proclaimed in a pure language (in pure Gospel Truth) that whosoever will, may call upon the name of the Lord, "to serve Him" with heart and soul. Then it is that "only those who have withstood temptation in the strength of the Mighty One will have a right to proclaim it [Third Angel's Message] when it shall have swelled into the Loud Cry." – "Review and Herald," Nov. 19, 1908.

Verses 10, 11 – "From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My suppliants, even the daughter of My dispersed, shall bring Mine offering. In that day shalt thou not be ashamed for all thy doings, wherein thou hast transgressed against Me: for then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty because of My holy mountain."

When the Gospel is proclaimed in "a pure language," then even from the ends of the earth God's people will come with an offering to the Lord.

Having removed all who rejoice in her pride the church shall be haughty no more.

Verse 12 – "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord."

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The fact that He leaves in their midst poor and afflicted people is sufficient evidence in itself

that the purification of the church takes place before the Millennium, before Isaiah 33:24 is fulfilled and before He sets up the kingdom mentioned therein.

Verse 13 – “The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.”

The remnant, those that are left after the purification takes place, shall sin no more. They shall forever thereafter stand without guile in their mouths.

Verse 14 – “Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem.”

A great day is coming for the righteous, a dreadful one for the wicked. We, therefore, as children of Zion, are encouraged to sing and shout for joy because we have finally come to the time of God’s great deliverance.

Verse 15 – “The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, He hath cast out thine enemy: the King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more.”

Surely these revelations of prophecy should encourage every believer to shout with joy as he realizes that the day in which he shall no more see evil is right at hand, that the Lord is to be his only king.

Verses 16-20 – “In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, **?9** Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing. I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden. Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord.”

The Lord wants us to know that when He turns away our captivity He will also make us a name and a praise among all the people of the earth. This kingdom of Judah (the church purified and set apart), is therefore, not only pre-millennial, but also probationary. And how glad we ought to be for the privilege to be among the first of the first fruits.

IS WORLD WAR II YET TO BE FINISHED – SAINTS YET TO BE DELIVERED?

OPENING REMARKS AND PRAYER

I shall read from “The Mount of Blessing,” beginning with the second paragraph on page 181.

M.B. p. 181, 182 – “...There may be a wonderful keenness of perception to discover the defects of others, but to every one who indulges this spirit, Jesus says, ‘Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.’ He who is guilty of wrong, is the first to suspect. By condemning another he is trying to conceal or excuse the evil of his own heart....

“When men indulge this accusing spirit, they are not satisfied with pointing out what they suppose to be a defect in their brother. If milder means fail of making him do what they think ought to be done, they will resort to compulsion. Just as far as lies in their power, they will force men to comply with their ideas of what is right.”

We need to pray for power to resist criticizing others than ourselves and thus to get closer and closer to Christ and to abundantly receive of His grace. Never yet have I seen a father or a mother criticize their own son or daughter. When parents hear others criticizing their offspring, then the critics often get into trouble. But those same defendants of their own sons and daughters, often criticize others with the idea that they do it for the good of the ones they criticize. If they actually believe that their criticism is prompted by love to help rather than to wound, and not to bolster their reputation and to cover up sin, then pray tell me why the critics do not give their own children some of it?

Let us pray for the grace of Christ to enable us to treat others as we would have them treat us, rather than to keep ourselves in sin by finding fault with their practice of religion. To watch our own steps is all we can do.

?11

IS WORLD WAR II YET TO BE FINISHED SAINTS YET TO BE DELIVERED?

(By Nahum)

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This afternoon we are to study the book of Nahum. The burden of this entire book, three chapters in all, is concerning two separate people. To ascertain who these people are, we shall begin with—

Nah. 1:1; 3:18 – “The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.... Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria: thy nobles shall dwell in the dust: thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them.”

Plainly, Assyria with her capital city, Nineveh, are the one people.

Now to find who the other people are, we shall read chapter 1, verses 12, 13, and 15 (omitting those parts of the verses which pertain to Assyria).

Nah. 1:12, 13, 15 – “Thus saith the Lord;... Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more. For now will I break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy bonds in sunder... Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: **?12** for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off.”

The people whom God has afflicted (by their dispersion among the nations) and whom He promises to afflict no more, and to break the Assyrian yoke from off their shoulders, are His people, His church – antitypical Judah. They are, therefore, the other people.

The title of God’s people, you note, is “Judah.” They are counselled to behold the messenger of God who at the fulfillment of this prophecy brings to them good tidings, tidings of peace...the message of the Kingdom of peace (Isa. 11:6-9). The Lord counsels them to be honest with Him, honest in their profession of faith. They are, moreover, assured that at the fulfillment of this prophecy the destroying angels are to remove the wicked from the midst of the righteous. Thus will the wicked be “raptured” away and be no more.

So it is that while Nahum predicts liberation and peace for God’s faithful people, he predicts disaster and humiliation for antitypical Assyria (the power which they serve) and for the wicked in the church.

Three verses of chapter two will suffice to show the fate of Assyria:

Nah. 2:6, 10, 13 – “The gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved.... She is empty, and void, and waste: and the heart melteth, and the knees smite together, and much pain is in all loins, and the faces of them all gather blackness.... Behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will burn her chariots in the smoke, and the **?13** sword shall devour thy young lions: and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard.”

Here the prophet predicts that Assyria’s capital city will be emptied, and her palace dissolved. Clearly, then, the kingdom of Judah is set up in time of war and turmoil. What additional signs will

mark the time? – Let us read from chapter two:

Nah. 2:3, 4 – “The shield of his mighty men is made red, the valiant men are in scarlet: the chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken. The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings.”

Since this prophecy meets its fulfillment in the day when the chariots are with “flaming torches”; when they run like lightning; when they jostle one against another in the highways and in the broadways, and since the automotive traffic of today completely and perfectly answers the prophet’s description of it, then there is no other conclusion but that the day in which we are now living is the day in which Nahum’s prophecy is to be fulfilled.

Now, in view of the truth that we are living in such a period as described by Nahum, together with the fact that preparations for Nahum’s war are made during a time of such lightning-like travel, the evidence clearly stands out that Nahum’s prophecy is to meet its fulfillment in our day, and that the “Assyria” here in prophecy, therefore, is not ancient Assyria, but another widespread power that exists “in the time of the end” (Dan. 12:9, 10) the time in which its yoke is ?14 removed from God’s people.

Moreover, since this antitypical Assyria’s fall liberates God’s people, and since from then on the wicked no longer pass through their midst, the time and the events are solidly clinched: All these predictions come to pass in the time of the purification of the church, in the Judgment day of the living, during the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

Nah. 2:1 – “He that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face: keep the munition, watch the way, make thy loins strong, fortify thy power mightily.”

It is plain to see that the one who dashes in pieces, and who comes before Assyria’s face is the one who forces Assyria to prepare, to militarize herself mightily. Her forced military preparations, agitated by him that dashes in pieces, starts Assyria on her downfall.

Now, to find out what happens to the one who dashes in pieces – he who compels Assyria to prepare mightily, we shall read–

Nah. 2:5 – “He shall recount his worthies: they shall stumble in their walk; they shall make haste to the wall thereof, and the defence shall be prepared.”

His worthies (his mighty generals) stumble in their walk; that is, they make a mistake as they march on in hope of victory. In view of their disastrous blunder, and in view of the fact that “he that dasheth in pieces” is mentioned no more in Nahum’s book, it is evident that by his stumbling he loses the war. Nevertheless, according to the verses that follow in Nahum’s chapters, the fall of Assyria is certain.

?15

The question, then arises, if Assyria is to fall, and if the one that starts the war, the “he that dasheth in pieces,” is himself to lose out first, then at whose hands is Assyria to fall? For the answer, Let us turn to Isaiah 31, where this same Assyria is again brought to view:

Isa. 31:6-8 – “Turn ye unto Him from Whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted. For in that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin. Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man; and the sword, not of a mean man, shall devour him: but he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be discomfited.”

Assyria is to fall and to be devoured, but not by the sword of a mean man, not by him who dashes in pieces.

Now the fact that God’s people are admonished to turn unto Him against Whom ancient Israel revolted, shows again that Inspiration is speaking to antitypical Israel, to God’s people in the Christian era.

Verse 7 – “For in that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin.”

Obviously the prophet is looking down the stream of time, to a time of a thorough reformation, a time in which only those who forsake every sin and embody Truth and righteousness will be left in the church. None others will be found in the congregation of the Lord. Then Assyria shall fall and thus shall her yoke be removed from the neck of God’s people.

?16

The Assyrian is to fall because of his wickedness, and because God’s people return to Him, because of a thorough revival and reformation.

Verse 9 – “And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the Lord, Whose fire is in Zion, and His furnace in Jerusalem.”

All these calamities overtake Assyria as soon as God’s people turn to Him, as soon as they cast away their idols.

What are the Lord’s fire in Zion, and His furnace in Jerusalem for? The answer we shall find in—

Mal. 3:1, 2 – “Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap.”

The prophecy of Isaiah, along with the prophecy of Malachi, make the subject very simple: According to these prophecies, during the Judgment of the Living and while the first fruits – the servants of God, the 144,000 – stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion, the headquarters of the gospel shall be in Zion and Jerusalem.”

Now before passing judgment as to whether Nahum prophesies the “World War II” it will be well to refresh our minds by summarizing the main points of the study:

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1. Two people are brought to view – the church, and a nation comparable to ancient Assyria, to which the church is under subjection.
2. God’s people, Judah, are asked to behold the messenger of God, who at the fulfillment of this prophecy and at a time broiling with war brings them good tidings of the Kingdom of peace.
3. The prophecy is fulfilled in the day of unprecedented motorized vehicular traffic, the day when the chariots (automobiles) are with flaming torches and when they jostle one against another in the broad ways – unquestionably in our day.
4. In this day, “he that dasheth in pieces” wars with this antitypical Assyria. He begins her downfall.
5. Assyria fortifies her power mightily after her enemy comes before her face.
6. On the march to victory, Assyria’s enemy – “he that dasheth in pieces” – makes a mistake and consequently falls, loses the war.
7. Assyria, nevertheless, later falls, too, but not by the sword of a mean man.
8. The war, the fast-rolling chariots, and a revival and reformation such as the world has never seen, are signposts of the fulfillment of Nahum’s prophecy.
9. When God’s people cast aside all their idols, fully turn to Him, then it is that Assyria falls. Then it is that the wicked are removed from the midst of ?18 the people of God, the Assyrian yoke is broken, and the servants of God, evidently the first fruits, the 144,000, stand with the Lamb on Mt. Zion.

Let us now consider the already historic facts:

Hitler made his preparation for war in an era when the chariots were raging in the streets, running

lightning-like, and jostling one against another in the broadways; that after the allies Hitler's military might breaking everything in pieces wherever he took his guns then it was that they themselves begun to build gigantic war machines; Hitler stumbled, as it were, by starting war against Russia while he was still engaged in war with Great Britain; although Germany lost the war, yet rather than taking deeper root since the downfall of Hitler, England is instead wearing away, and the crashing sounds of her empire are becoming louder with each passing day; Hitler's war has dashed in pieces the whole world, and new chips and cracks are heard and seen right along – that there are new partisan politics from within and from without in every nation and people.

Since Nahum's description of the city and country traffic at the time his war prophecy is fulfilled perfectly fits the conditions of World War II, we are assured that the war which Hitler began will actually be finished when Assyria falls, and when her yoke is removed from the neck of God's people. From then on the wicked shall no more be found in the congregation of the righteous.

What is the over-all purpose of Nahum's prophecy? It is to enlighten God's people of the signs of the times, to make them aware that "the great and dreadful day of the Lord" is at hand, that the purification ?19 of the church, the "Judgment in the house of God" (1 Pet. 4:17) is soon to take place, that the wicked shall not much longer be in their midst, that the redemption of the righteous is at hand, that they must not fail to perform their God-given duties. Indeed, Nahum's prophecy clearly identifies God's people of today under the Assyrian yoke, and points to their liberation.

Most important of all, though, the prophet Nahum plainly tells that all these things take place in our day, and that the fall of Assyria takes place while God's people are turning to Him, while revival and reformation are successfully carried by him who "publisheth peace" (Nah. 1:15). If we, therefore, fail to take hold of the message, and if we fail to reform as it recommends, then it is not possible to survive the day of the Lord.

(For a detailed study of the book of Nahum, study Tract No. 14, "War News Forecast.")

?2

WHICH NATIONS WILL DISARM, AND WHY?

OPENING PRAYER THOUGHT

I shall read from "The Mount of Blessing," beginning on page 182:

M.B., pg. 182 — "Christ does not drive but draws men unto Him. The only compulsion which He employs is the constraint of love. When the church begins to seek for the support of secular power, it is evident that she is devoid of the power of Christ — the constraint of divine love.

"But the difficulty lies with the individual members of the church, and it is here that the cure must be wrought. Jesus bids the accuser first cast the beam out of his own eye, renounce his censorious spirit, confess and forsake his own sin, before trying to correct others.... What you need is a change of heart. You must have this experience

before you are fitted to correct others; for 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.'

"When a crisis comes in the life of any soul, and you attempt to give counsel or admonition, your words will have only the weight of influence for good that your own example and spirit have gained for you. You must be good before you can do good. You can not exert an influence that will transform others until your own heart has been humbled and refined and made tender by the grace of Christ. When this change has been wrought in you, it will be as natural for you to live to bless others as it is for the rose-bush to yield its fragrant bloom, or the vine its purple clusters."

We need to pray for a change of heart; pray for a realization that to have a censorious spirit is even worse than to seek the aid of a secular power, and that setting a good example can be our only weight of influence for good.

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WHICH NATIONS WILL DISARM, AND WHY?

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,
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SABBATH, JANUARY 25, 1947
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To continue with the theme of our previous studies – the kingdom of Judah – we shall turn to the book of Micah. It consists as you know, of seven chapters, and they carry a continuous story of Judah in both her early and her latter days. The first three chapters are concerning Judah in her early days, and the last four contain the promises to antitypical Judah, the Judah of the latter days, of whom our main interest now is.

In order to connect the first three chapters of Micah with the last four, we shall begin with the last verse of chapter three.

Mic. 3:12 – "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest."

Because there was nothing more that could have been done to convince Judah that she was in the wrong and that she was in need to return to the Lord, the Lord finally forewarned that her palace ground was to be plowed as a field, and that her palace and city were to become heaps. The fulfillment of this part of Micah's prophecy is a faithful witness before all nations, an ?4 for all people to know that God means just what He says. God did not, however, cast aside His faithful few and their descendants forever. To them He left this comforting promise–

Mic. 4:1 – "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above

the hills; and people shall flow unto it.”

Although Micah forespoke sad news for ancient Judah, he forespoke this joyful news for Judah of the latter days. Trying, indeed, must it have been for Judah to look forward to her own destruction. Conversely, though, it must have encouraged her to know that the time would come for her to return and to “build the old waste places,” “to raise up the foundations of many generations” (Isa. 58:12). And still more joyful should she now be to learn that the time for her returning to God and to the homeland has actually come!

In order to obviate any doubt in this connection the Lord reaffirms His Word by saying: “For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: It shall not return unto Me void, but It shall accomplish that which I please, and It shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent It. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord **25** for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.” Isa. 55:10-13. We, too, should clap our hands even now for having this great opportunity to engage in this glorious work, and for the great and grand privilege to proclaim these good tidings and to be called “The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.” Isa. 58:12. Indeed these are the “good tidings” of “peace” that the prophet Nahum forespoke. Nah. 1:15.

When the kingdom of Judah is re-established, then it is that the scripture is fulfilled:

Verse 2 – “And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee. And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again. Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.” Zechariah 2:10-13.

“And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. The multitude of **26** camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall

come up with acceptance on Mine altar, and I will glorify the house of My glory. Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in My wrath I smote thee, but in My favour have I had mercy on thee. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.” Isa. 60:3-12.

Obviously we are right at the dawn of a new day, the day in which the gospel work is to triumph in victory and to reap an abundant harvest of converts. Virtually whole nations are to join “the mountain of the Lord” during the Judgment day, the day in which the law goes “forth of Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem,” from the future headquarters of the gospel.

The time is, therefore, near at hand when in order truly to go to church, one must go to Jerusalem, and there be taught the way of the Lord, and to thus walk in His paths.

Mic. 4:3 – “And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into ?7 pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

Many nations are gladly to accept His rebukes, beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks rather than continue to run in the armament race.

According to Micah, the only nations that are to disarm are those that accept the Lord’s Truth for today and go to the Promised Land. Never again will they need either swords or spears.

Verse 4 – “But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.”

The nations and peoples are now having a difficult time to get to their “fig tree,” so to speak, much less to sit in peace under it. They are in constant fear that some one may dislodge them even from their sitting under no tree. Consequently they will try to protect their rights, or unrights, by beating their “plowshares into swords, and [their] pruning hooks into spears.” Joel 3:10. And so judging their own strength by their war preparations, even the weak will say, “I am strong.” But it shall not be thus with those nations which join the people of the Kingdom of the Lord: They will not need to trust in their own strength, for they shall have the Lord’s protection. Each shall comfortably and securely sit under his own “fig tree,” knowing that no one can possibly push him away from under it. This is to be so, for “the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.”

Verse 5 – “For all people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.”

Those outside of the Kingdom that the Spirit of God cannot convince of their error, will continue to walk in the name of their false gods. But the people in the Kingdom “will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.”

Verse 6, 7 – “In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; and I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.”

The day in which God’s people are gathered from all parts of the earth and brought to Zion is at hand, and the Lord will reign over them henceforth forever.

Verse 8 – “And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall It come, even the first dominion; the Kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.”

The “tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion,” is to be the main object of attraction in Jerusalem. And what could it be? – Well in olden times towers were built for the purpose of keeping a watch over the city, and so “the tower of the flock” must be the throne on Zion, a lofty hill, Zion’s stronghold. This stronghold, you note, does not belong to the mother (not to ancient Zion) but to her daughter (to antitypical Zion).

Verses 9, 10 – “Now why dost thou cry out aloud? is 29 there no king in thee? is thy counsellor perished? for pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail. Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go even to Babylon; there shalt thou be delivered; there the Lord shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies.”

These two verses take us back to the time when the faithful of ancient Judah cried out as they saw themselves about to be dispersed among the nations, but the encouraging counsel to labour and bring forth children while in the field, and the comforting promise of her deliverance from antitypical Babylon, left her by the prophets, ever remained with her even to this day. Zion, the church, was destined to go into the Gentile nations, there to multiply, and at last to be delivered. These good tidings, now just before the gathering begins, the Lord wants us to proclaim far and wide, saying: “Hear the Word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare It in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than

he. Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all.” Jer. 31:10-12.

Verses 11, 12 – “Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they His counsel: for **?10** He shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor.”

Verse 13 – “Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.”

Not the daughter of Jerusalem, but the daughter of Zion is to do the threshing. And she has the promise of an iron horn – Divine power, the kind that does not break. Moreover she is promised hoofs of brass, a special and distinct message by which to beat in pieces many people; that is, she is with it to thresh and select the wheat from the chaff. “I then saw the third angel. Said my accompanying angel, ‘Fearful is his work. Awful is his mission. He is the angel that is to select the wheat from the tares, and seal, or bind, the wheat for the heavenly garner. These things should engross the whole mind, the whole attention.’” – “Early Writings,” p. 118.

“For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many.” Isa. 66:15, 16. This is the first separation.

“And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard My fame, neither have seen My glory; and they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and **?11** in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to My holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord.” Isa. 66:19, 20.

Those that escape from the slaying of the Lord, you note, are sent to the Gentile nations there to proclaim to them the Lord’s fame and His glory, and also to bring all their brethren (all that can be saved) to the house of the Lord. From this you can plainly see that those who escape must be the first fruits, the 144,000 Jacobites (Rev. 14:4). Those whom they bring from the Gentile nations to the house of the Lord must, therefore, be the second fruits (Rev. 7:9), thus where there is first there is also second. Finally you plainly see that from the purification of the church the

144,000 escape and become the servants of God, the remnant, those who finish the gospel work in all the world.

Now to summarize, let us review the most outstanding points of the study:

First the kingdom of Judah was to be dissolved – Zion plowed as a field and Jerusalem reduced to heaps.

Then in the latter days it is to be re-established, and exalted above the kingdoms of the Gentiles.

Third, when it is thus “established,” many nations are to go into it, and even to invite one another to go there to be taught the Lord’s way and to walk in His paths. This is to be so because the “law is to go forth of Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

?12

Fourth, the Lord is to judge from Zion, and from there He is to rebuke strong nations afar off. Those who accept His rebuke are to beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. The nations that join the Kingdom of the Lord are never again to lift up a sword against a nation, nor will they learn war any more. No longer will they need armament, for they are to be protected by a “wall of fire.” Zech. 2:5. Every man is to sit under his own fig tree, and none is to make him afraid, “for the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.”

Fifth, everyone of those who do not go to Jerusalem, and who do not disarm, shall walk in the name of his own false god. But all who join the kingdom of Judah shall walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.

Sixth, God will assemble and gather His people, the church – she that halteth, and she that was driven out, and she that was afflicted. He will make her a strong nation “and the Lord shall reign over them in Mt. Zion from henceforth even for ever.”

Seventh, to this Kingdom shall come even the first dominion.

This afternoon’s study shows how the gathering is to be accomplished and the gospel work finished, and the wicked world brought to an end. True, such a plan for finishing the work has not been our plan, but it is about time we realize that our plans have never been and never will be the Lord’s plans. We had better now accept His plans if we wish to go to Zion and there to stand with the Lamb.

A new day is dawning on us, Brother, Sister. And ?13 now, rather than imagining that we are rich and increased with goods, in need of nothing, we see ourselves in need of everything. Shall we not accept these riches (Truth) that are tried in the fire, and these garments of righteousness by which to cover our nakedness? Shall we not anoint our eyes with this fresh golden oil of Truth that we may see and know the way, that we may reach “the door” on time? There is no reason for staying wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. The Lord is waiting at the door of our hearts. He is anxious to pour out a blessing, to fill the cup to overflowing. Let us not disappoint Him by forcing Him to pass us by. Let us now disarm and fearlessly prepare to sit in peace under our God-given “fig tree.”

A WORLD WIDE STIR, AND ITS RESULTS

OPENING PRAYER THOUGHT

I shall read from “The Mount of Blessing,” beginning on page 183, the last paragraph.

M.B., pg. 183 – “If Christ is in you ‘the hope of glory,’ you will have no disposition to watch others, to expose their errors. Instead of seeking to accuse and condemn, it will be your object to help, to bless, and to save. In dealing with those who are in error, you will heed the injunction, Consider ‘thyself, lest thou also be tempted.’ You will call to mind the many times you have erred, and how hard it was to find the right way when you had once left it. You will not push your brother into greater darkness, but with a heart full of pity will tell him of his danger.

“He who looks often upon the cross of Calvary, remembering that his sins placed the Saviour there, will never try to estimate the degree of his guilt in comparison with that of others. He will not climb upon the judgment seat to bring accusation against another. There can be no spirit of criticism or self-exaltation on the part of those who walk in the shadow of Calvary’s cross.”

From this we see that our need is to pray for Christ to abide in us, so that instead of watching for opportunities to accuse or to condemn others, and to expose their errors, we shall seek every occasion to help them, to bless them, to save them. We should pray for a deep realization of our own sins; pray that the spirit of criticism and self-exaltation be forever banished from us. Then we shall not feel free to mount the judgment seat and accuse anyone.

A WORLD WIDE STIR, AND ITS RESULTS

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,
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SABBATH, FEBRUARY 1, 1947
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WACO, TEXAS

This afternoon we shall continue our study of the book of Micah. Let us turn to the fifth chapter, and begin with the first verse.

Micah 5:1 – “Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: He hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek.”

You will notice that besides introducing a number of pronouns – he, us, they, this verse also introduces several different topics: first a “daughter of troops,” then “the judge of Israel” and a

“rod.” Other subjects are introduced further along in the chapter.

Now to gain the vision and the lesson that Inspiration is anxious that we should from this scripture, it is necessary that we study one subject at a time. And in order to do this, we must group the verses according to subjects. Since the subject of verse one is the same as of verses 10-15, we shall quote them connectively:

Verses 1, 10-15 – “Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops:... and it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots: and I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down **?16** all thy strong holds: and I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers: thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands. And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee: so will I destroy thy cities. And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard.”

These verses present a group of people – good and bad commingled – whom God is to cleanse. Then the scripture closes with God’s promise to execute vengeance upon the heathen. The mixed group of people, “wheat” and “tares,” very obviously constitute the church that is approaching “the time of the harvest” (Matt. 13:30), the time in which all idolators are to perish. “So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just.... Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.” Matt. 13:49, 43.

We now come to the last part of Micah 5:1. The antecedent of the pronoun “He” is found in the preceding verse – chapter 4, verse 13. There quickly we see that it is the Lord Himself. Plainly, then, by the pronoun “us” Micah means himself and his people – Judah and Israel, the church.

Clear it is that while the Lord with His message of warning and reproofs makes a siege against His people the adversaries gather together in groups to oppose. Such has been the case at the introduction of each newly-revealed Truth.

The church is logically called “daughter of troops,” because her mother the Jewish church at the time of **?17** the introduction of the gospel of Christ, gathered together in troops, to oppose the Lord.

Moreover being smitten in the face rather than in the back, the Judge of Israel (Christ) must have been squarely facing them – speaking to them, – the reason for which the Jews’ crucified Him. The verses that follow verse one again confirm the fact that “the Judge” is Christ. They that smite Him are, of course, His adversaries, His enemies. Concerning them Inspiration says:

Verse 9 – “Thine hand shall be lifted up upon Thine adversaries, and all Thine enemies

shall be cut off.”

According to Christ's parables, the time His “adversaries,” His enemies of progressive Truth, are cut off is at the commencement of the purification of the church, at the harvest time. Then, according to Ezekiel's prophecy, the Lord commissions the men with slaughtering weapons in their hands, saying, “Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.” Ezek. 9:5, 6. The Spirit of Prophecy confirms this by saying:

“Here we see that the church – the Lord's sanctuary – was the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God. The ancient men, those to whom God had given great light, and who had stood as guardians of the spiritual interests of the people, had betrayed their trust. They had taken the position that we need not look for miracles and the marked manifestation of God's power as in former days. Times have changed. These words strengthen their unbelief, and they say, The ?18 Lord will not do good neither will he do evil. He is too merciful to visit his people in judgment. Thus peace and safety is the cry from men who will never again lift up their voice like a trumpet to show God's people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins. These dumb dogs, that would not bark, are the ones who feel the just vengeance of an offended God. Men, maidens, and little children, all perish together.” – “Testimonies,” Vol. 5, pg. 211. And through the apostle Peter, Inspiration declares:

“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?” 1 Pet. 4:17.

Verse 2 – “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”

There is no doubt that this verse predicts the birth of Christ, “the Judge of Israel,” “Whose goings forth” have been from everlasting.

Verse 3 – “Therefore will He give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of His brethren shall return unto the children of Israel.”

Crucifying Christ and their refusing to return to the Lord, there was nothing that could have been done for the Jews at that time but to give them up “until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth.”

The pronoun “she” points to the daughter of Zion ?19 (Mic. 4:10). She is to bring forth her children while in the field; while in the Gentile lands. Then the time of her sojourning is to end and she is to be delivered. “In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth,...and I will make her that halted a remnant...and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.” Mic. 4:6, 7.

Verses 4, 5 – “And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide: for now shall He be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men.”

When the children of the daughter of Zion return to Mount Zion, they are to abide forever. Never again are they to be cast out among the Gentile nations. Never are they to be given up. The Lord is thus to make Himself “great unto the ends of the earth.” When she that travaileth shall have brought forth, then the saints are to raise against the Assyrian “seven shepherds, and eight principal men”; that is, all God’s shepherds and all His principal men, including Christ, the eighth.

Verse 6 – “And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders.”

The kingdom of Israel that was destroyed by Assyria, and also the kingdom of Judah that was destroyed by Babylon, even all the twelve tribes of 20 Israel are to be delivered.

“And I will,” declares the Lord, “make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be My people, and I will be their God. And David My servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in My judgments, and observe My statutes, and do them.” Ezek. 37:22-24.

Verse 7 – “And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men.”

After the Judgment in the house of God takes place, then it is that “the remnant,” those that are left, are to finish the work of the gospel.

“Those who have trusted to intellect, genius, or talent, will not then stand at the head of rank and file. They did not keep pace with the light. Those who have proved themselves unfaithful will not then be entrusted with the flock. In the last solemn work few great men will be engaged. They are self-sufficient, independent of God, and he cannot use them. The Lord has faithful servants, who in the shaking, testing time will be disclosed to view.” – “Testimonies,” Vol. 5, pg. 80.

Then it is that they, the remnant of Jacob, are to be gathered into their homeland, after which they are sent as missionaries to the Gentiles that have not heard of God's name and of His fame. Thus it is that those who escape alive from the Judgment of the Lord, the remnant, shall be as dew from the Lord, as showers upon the grass. They shall wait for none in their missionary work. They shall bring all their brethren out of all nations "for an offering unto the Lord." Isa. 66:15, 16, 20.

Verse 8 – "And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver."

While God's people are as dew and as showers to the righteous (Mic. 5:7), they are to the wicked as lions among beasts and flocks of sheep. In other words, their gospel will save the penitent, but destroy the impenitent.

Verses 9-14 – "Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots: and I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strong holds: and I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers: thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the work of thy hands. And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee: so will I destroy thy cities."

These verses can mean only one thing, and that is, that God will thoroughly purge His floor. He will take the fan in His hand and blow out the chaff, He ?22 will destroy the sinners that are among His people. In thus purifying His church, He will create a clean people, a united and zeal-filled ministry. "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice;" He declares, "with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion." Isa. 52:8.

Verse 15 – "And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard."

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" 1 Peter 4:17, 18.

That we miss no part of the lesson in this study, let us recapitulate the main points.

To begin with, a group of people – good and bad commingled – are brought to view. They, as we

have seen, constitute the church that is approaching the time of harvest in which the wicked are to be severed from among the just. (Matt. 13:49).

While the Lord with a message of warnings and reproofs makes a siege against His people, the adversaries gather together in groups ("troops") to oppose. Then they are to be cut off. The horses (leaders) shall be cut off (discharged) and the chariots (gathering places) destroyed. God's people are to be thoroughly purged of sin and sinners and only the penitent are to be left. They are the remnant of Jacob who "shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for **?23** they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid." Zeph. 3:13. They are to be gathered into their homeland, from thence to go as missionaries to the Gentiles. To the penitent they are to be as dew and as showers, but to the impenitent, as lions among beasts and flocks.

So the stir caused by Truth's siege of the church and It's adversaries warring against It, that is already beginning to arrest the attention of the world, is to result in the cleansing of the church, "temple." Mal. 3:1-3.

Thus is the Lord to finish His work on earth, gather His people, destroy the sinners and the heathen alike. Necessarily, "...the days of purification of the church are hastening on apace. God will have a people pure and true." – "Testimonies," Vol. 5, pg. 80.

?24

Depth Of Mercy

Depth of mercy! can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?
Can my God His wrath forbear,
Me, the chief of sinners spare?

I have long withstood His grace,
Long provoked Him to His face,
Would not hearken to His calls,
Grieved Him by a thousand falls.

There for me the Saviour stands,
Shows His wounds and spreads His hands,
God is love! I know, I feel;
Jesus weeps and loves me still.