TIMELY GREETINGS

— The Only Peace of Mind —

Vol. 1 Nos 21,22



THE CHURCH ENTERING INTO AND IN THE HARVEST PERIOD

THE HATED JEWS OF TODAY NOT THE ADMIRED JEWS OF TOMORROW

OPENING REMARKS AND PRAYER

I shall read from "The Mount of Blessing," page 175, the last paragraph.

M.B., pg. 175 – "In the vision of the prophet Ezekiel, there was the appearance of a hand beneath the wings of the cherubim. This is to teach His servants that it is divine power which gives them success. Those whom God employs as His messengers are not to feel that His work is dependent upon them. Finite beings are not left to carry this burden of responsibility. He who slumbers not, who is continually at work for the accomplishment of His designs, will carry forward His own work. He will thwart the purposes of wicked men, and will bring to confusion the counsels of those who plot mischief against His people. He who is the King, the Lord of hosts, sitteth between the cherubim, and amid the strife and tumult of nations He guards His children still. He who ruleth in the heavens is our Saviour. He measures every trial, He watches the furnace fire that must test every soul. When the strongholds of kings shall be overthrown, when the arrows of wrath shall strike through the hearts of His enemies, His people will be safe in His hands."

What shall we now pray for? – I think we should pray to know that God, not man, is at the head of the work; to know that no man of himself can advance or thwart God's work; that only God Himself can do either; that we need not feel God's work is dependent upon us; that if we ever remember this, we shall have a closer walk with Him. This, I believe, is what we ought to pray for today.

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V.T. HOUTEFF

THE CHURCH ENTERING INTO AND IN THE HARVEST PERIOD

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,
MINISTER OF DAVIDIAN 7TH-DAY ADVENTISTS
SABBATH, DECEMBER 28, 1946
MT. CARMEL CHAPEL
WACO, TEXAS

No matter how great and how effective a revival and reformation even God Himself may launch in His church, the Scriptures make it plain that both the sinners and the saints will be in the church until the harvest. No one need brag that the members of his church are all saints, that they are all of one accord. If they really are of one accord, then it must be that they are all tares, that there is no saint among them; that church for a certainty is not the church of which Christ speaks in His Word. If anything is plain in the Bible this one thing is. Now let us turn to the thirteenth chapter of Matthew.

Matt. 13:24, 25 – "Another parable put He forth unto them, saying, The Kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way."

The reason given for the tares to be among the wheat is that "men slept." Plainly then, if man had kept awake, the Enemy would not have sown the tares. Now, to ascertain what it means for men to be awake, we shall read from the third chapter of Matthew.

Matt. 3:5, 6 – "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all

Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins."

This scripture makes plain that John baptized many, and that those whom he baptized were only those who confessed their sins.

Verses 7, 8 – "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."

Though these were the popular groups of John's day, he not only refused to baptize them, but also plainly and politely gave them to understand that baptism is not something with which to cover sins, but something with which to wash them away. He made it clear that he was not in the business of making hypocrites. John left no doubt in their minds that God did not have need of them, but that they had need of Him. The Pharisees and the Sadducees then went away with full knowledge that the great wide-awake preacher of the day was not taken up with their popularity, much less with their pedigree. In view of John's firmness of purpose, and the fact that the Lord said no greater prophet than he had ever risen, we know that John was wide awake, and so all preachers should be.

We as members of the church, too, should be awake as was John, and as firm as was Job, able to say: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him...." Job 13:15.

Matt. 22:9-12 – "Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So

those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

"And when the King came in to see the guests, He saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and He saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless."

Though God's servants be awake and do their work right, yet some of the members may fail to put on the wedding garment. A garment, you know, is something to put on the outside of the body. The garment, therefore, denotes a daily Christ-like deportment – the righteousness of Christ in one's daily life.

The fact that the man in the parable was speechless when asked, "Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?" shows that he was guilty of neglect, not of ignorance! He was without excuse, and he knew it.

Let us go back to–

Matt. 25:1-5 – "Then shall the Kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept."

Again it plainly appears that the church membership is divided into two classes, the wise and the foolish. The wise take no chances; they continually search

for oil (Truth) and they fill their vessels with It at first opportunity. The foolish, though, see no need for any more than what is in their lamps; they are satisfied with what they already have.

The oil, a substance which lightens ahead one's path, obviously is figurative of prophetic Truth, Truth that lightens the heart by unveiling the future. Concretely speaking, the lamp filled with oil denotes the individual's reservoir of Truth in action, Truth that meets his needs only for the time then present. The extra oil in the vessels, therefore, represents additional Truth, Truth that takes up where the old Truth leaves off. In other words, the oil in the lamps and the oil in the vessels represent two revealed truths, at two different times, one following the other. For example, while the Judgment for the Dead is Truth in action, the Judgment for the Living is Truth to go into action as soon as the Judgment for the Dead is over.

Obviously, oil that has been consumed, as is the oil in the virgins' lamps, represents past Truth, Truth that has accomplished Its purpose; but the oil in the vessels represents Truth ready to be activated and made to shine immediately after the oil in the lamps is consumed. Since the ten virgins represent the church membership during the Judgment for the Dead, the oil in the lamps manifestly represents the truth of the Judgment for the Dead. The extra oil, that is in the "vessels" must, therefore, represent the truth of the Judgment for the Living, the additional Truth (Early Writings, pg. 277). Plainly then, the lamps gone empty represent the Judgment for the Dead passing away, and the oil in the vessels represents the Truth of the Judgment for the Living going into action.

Since all ten had oil in the lamps, but only half of them had the oil in the vessels, the symbolism clearly discloses that, as always, the whole church membership did not accept the message of the Judgment for the Living. The foolish virgins were satisfied with the Truth they had acquired while joining the church that bore the message of the Judgment for the Dead, but failed to acquaint themselves with the additional message – the message of the Judgment for the Living. Finally, after the necessity for It became imperative, they began to search for It but it did them no good, they were too late getting It.

These were left out with the tares only because they let the Devil sow in their hearts seeds of foolishness, seeds of contentment (lukewarmness) with the initial truths by which they joined the church; thus they mistakenly felt no need of additional light from the Lord. But when prophecy began to fulfill itself beyond their scope of Divinely revealed knowledge, and as they saw the events of the gospel shaping themselves contrary to their expectations, they became alarmed and confused, saw themselves in darkness.

The lesson is unmistakable: Those who for ever feel "rich, and increased with goods, and in need of nothing more, will not get to the "door" on time.

Besides the tares among the wheat, there are idlers, inactive folk who are to be cast out and destroyed with the tares. Let us read–

Matt. 25:14-30 – "For the Kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, Who called His own servants, and delivered unto them His goods. And

unto one He gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took His journey.

"Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his Lord's money.

"After a long time the Lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, Thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

"He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, Thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His Lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

"Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew Thee that Thou art an hard man, reaping where Thou hast not sown, and gathering where Thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid Thy talent in the earth: lo, there Thou hast that is Thine. His Lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: thou oughtest therefore to have put

My money to the exchangers, and then at My coming I should have received Mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

From this parable is seen that when a Christian falls asleep, Satan comes along and sows seeds of idleness in his heart so as to cause him to be cast out with the tares. At the commencement of the harvest, therefore, this class of tares is the first to appear as such. It is high time to learn that religion is not an opiate.

There is still another class of church members who in a different way fall victims with the tares. This we shall see from–

Matt. 25:31-46 – "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

"Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came

unto Me.

"Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee?

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me. Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in: naked, and ye clothed Me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not.

"Then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

The most outstanding sin of the goat class of professed believers is that they are all for self and none for others. The sheep class are the opposite in character. Since those who do charity work are not to make a display of it – not to let the left hand know what the right hand is doing (Matt. 6:3) – and since the system of such benevolent work is clearly pointed out in the Hebrew economy, we would do well to look there

for it: "To promote the assembling of the people for religious service, as well as to provide for the poor, a second tithe of all the increase was required. Concerning the first tithe, the Lord had declared, 'I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel.' But in regard to the second he commanded, 'Thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always.' Thus tithe, or its equivalent in money, they were for two years to bring to the place where the sanctuary was established. After presenting a thank-offering to God, and a specified portion to the priest, the offerers were to use the remainder for a religious feast, in which the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow should participate. Thus provision was made for the thank-offerings and feasts at the yearly festivals, and the people were drawn to the society of the priests and Levites, that they might receive instruction and encouragement in the service of God." – "Patriarchs And Prophets," p. 530. For this work to be carried out systematically by the Lord's treasury through gifts and free will offerings, sometimes called second tithe, we cannot but do likewise if we are to find favor with God. Now back to–

Matt. 13:44 – "Again, the Kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."

Verses 45, 46 – "Again, the Kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

These parables distinctly point out that those who do not care to invest everything they possess, if need be, to obtain the Kingdom, are to be cast out with the tares.

Verses 47, 48 – "Again, the Kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away."

A net cast into the sea naturally catches good and bad, small and large fish. But fish, like all other living creatures, move in families, each species with its kind, and so each time the net is cast, it catches families of fish. So it is that the gospel net in many instances naturally brings in families and relatives all in one catch; that is, as parents accept the gospel of Christ, along with them are often brought the children, and even relatives and friends.

The bad fish represent those who, with no real knowledge, conviction and conversion of their own but through emotion and the influence of others join the church. So it is that those who never studiously, whole-heartedly and zealously take hold of the principles of Christ are cast out, there to perish with the tares. All who are too lazy to study, and who give the Devil a chance to sow devilish seed in their hearts, making them believe that the preacher or the minister will take them through the Pearly Gates, having no experience of their own, are cheated of eternal life; they instead get eternal death.

True enough, the Spirit of God causes people to become one thing, and the spirit of Satan causes them to become another thing, but the difference is discernible

only as the harvest time approaches – when the Truth of the harvest is revealed.

From these simple parables comes the fact that Satan raises tares in the church and ever tries his level best to keep them in it. Why? – Let us find the answer in Revelation 12 –

Rev. 12:13 – "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child."

When the Devil saw that he was no longer permitted entrance into Heaven, he went to persecute the church after she brought forth "the man child," Christ. The dragon, therefore, is to persecute the church in her Christian period.

Verse 14 – "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent."

Because of the persecution, the church was given the means by which to take her flight from the promised land (the vineyard) into the land of the Gentiles (the wilderness).

Verse 15 – "And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood."

At the beginning, the serpent persecuted the church, but as he saw that the church still grew and prospered, he reversed his tactics, and began instead to persecute the Pagans who would not join the church, and raised ministers by whom to bring in a flood of unconverted

by which to paganize the church, so that she could not Christianize them.

Verse 16 – "And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth."

Thus is the church purified and thus are the tares destroyed. As tares they are burned; as unprofitable workers they are cast into outer darkness there to weep and gnash their teeth; as unfit guests for the wedding they are bound hand and foot and cast out into outer darkness; as foolish virgins they are refused entrance; as goats they are sent into everlasting punishment; as dragon's flood, they are swallowed by the earth. But the actual thing that happens to them all in common, is fully described in Ezekiel's prophecy, chapter 9. Let us turn to it–

Ezek. 9:1-11 – "He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar.

"And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon He was, to the threshold of the house. And He called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side; and the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst

thereof.

"And to the others He said in mine hearing, 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. And He said unto them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city.

"And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord God! wilt Thou destroy all the residue of Israel in Thy pouring out of Thy fury upon Jerusalem?

"Then said He unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not. And as for Me also, Mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head. And, behold, the man clothed with linen, which had the inkhorn by his side, reported the matter, saying, I have done as Thou hast commanded me."

The promise to purify Jerusalem, Judah and Israel stands as sure as any promise in the Word. The terms, Jerusalem, Judah, Israel you know, cannot be applied to anything but to the church, the place where everyone should sigh and cry against abominations. Those who do not sigh and cry are to be left without the mark, and then the angels who have charge of the church smite everyone of them – "old and young,

both maids and little children, and women." Only those who have the mark shall be left. They are the remnant. The angels are thus to take care of both the wheat and the tares.

Yes, there is to be a clean riddance of every sort of tare just as anciently there was a clean riddance of all the first-born in the households that failed to paint the doorpost with the sacrificial blood on the evening of the Passover in the land of Egypt. So shall it be at the commencement of the harvest, in the purification of the church: The angels shall smite everyone who fosters the abominations "in the midst thereof."

When is this thorough purging to take place? For the answer let us turn to Zephaniah, chapter 1.

Zeph. 1:2, 3 – "I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the Lord. I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumbling blocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the Lord."

Here is a promise that the Lord is to thoroughly cleanse the land, and I am sure none of you will say that these prophecies have ever been fulfilled.

Verses 4, 5 – "I will also stretch out Mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, and the name of the Chemarims with the priests; and them that worship the host of heaven upon the housetops; and them that worship and that swear by the Lord, and that swear by Malcham."

Not only the land but the people that are to make up the house of Judah, are to be cleansed: There is to be a clean land and a clean people as well.

Verse 6 – "And them that are turned back from the Lord; and those that have not sought the Lord, nor enquired for Him."

The backslider and the indifferent, those who are unstable and those who see no need of God, are to perish along with the tares.

Verse 7 – "Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God: for the day of the Lord is at hand: for the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, He hath bid His guests."

This is the long-expected great and dreadful day of the Lord.

Verse 8 – "And it shall come to pass in the day of the Lord's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel."

Verse 9-11 – "In the same day also will I punish all those that leap on the threshold, which fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, that there shall be the noise of a cry from the fish gate, and an howling from the second, and a great crashing from the hills. Howl, ye inhabitants of Maktesh, for all the merchant people are cut down; all they that bear silver are cut off."

The great crashing shall be from both the fish gates and from the hills – from land and from sea. Both, the servants that bring violence and deceit upon

their master's houses, and the wicked masters themselves, shall be punished.

Verses 12-18 – "And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil. Therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation: they shall also build houses, but not inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, but not drink the wine thereof. The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy: for He shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land."

The time of the day of the Lord is pointed out by increased "wrath," "trouble," "distress," "wasteness," "desolation," "darkness" and "gloominess," – a time in which no one knows what to do to avert disaster, a time of so much fear even by the cities that are best fortified. So far as I know there has never been the like. The world's condition of today is the only condition that meets the challenge of these prophecies. Since this is true, then this is the day in which

the Lord is to search Jerusalem with candles. This is the day in which he is to cleanse His people from sin and sinners. It is "the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

Mal. 3:1-5 – "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' sope: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years. And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not Me, saith the Lord of hosts."

Should we not now consider ourselves the most fortunate people in the world for knowing these things beforehand? Shall we not be glad and thankful for having been warned beforehand that we have come almost to the time of the harvest, and that we have been given the opportunity to make ready for it? Shall we not be glad that we are not left in darkness, and that we are now plainly shown that these are the closing hours of the pre-harvest period, that the harvest will soon begin?

Rev. 18:1 – "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory."

The fulfillment of this scripture is what is called the Loud Cry of the Third Angel's Message. But note that the whole earth is lightened with his glory. Let us now take notice of what happens after the Three Angels' Messages permeate the earth, after the earth is thus lightened with the glory of the angel.

Verse 2 – "And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."

Ah, after the earth is lightened, then it is that Babylon falls. Plainly, then, Babylon has not actually fallen as yet. In fact Babylon has not even come into existence yet, for she is yet to mount (rule) the beast (the world). See Revelation 17 and Tract #12, "The World Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow."

Verse 4 – "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

This voice from heaven, you see, comes to God's people after the earth is lightened with the Loud Cry of the angel. The burden of the Voice is that God's people should come out of Babylon so that they be not partakers of her sins, and receive not of her plagues. If on this account they must come out of Babylon, then it must be that the place into which they are called to come is free from sin and thus free from danger of

the plagues. And where could that be but in the purified land and church of God, where there is no more sin and no more sinners to endanger the peace of God's people? Vain, indeed, it would be if the people were called from one place of sin and brought into another place of sin. As clear as crystal it is that the purification of the church ("cleansing" – Dan. 8:14; Judgment of the Living – 1 Pet. 4:17) takes place before the Loud Cry of the Third Angel's message begins in the world, before God's people are called out of Babylon.

"The third angel's message is to lighten the earth with its glory; but only those who have withstood temptation in the strength of the Mighty One will be permitted to act a part in proclaiming it when it shall have swelled into the loud cry." – "The Review and Herald," Nov. 19, 1908.

Most Christians know that there are two classes in the church – wheat and tares – but few, if any, seem to care. We, as reformers though, especially since we have been given this great light on the subject, cannot afford to be indifferent.

We may now intelligently choose to be "wheat" or choose to be "tares." If after knowing this Truth, some choose to be "tares," they, of course, will have gained nothing and need not be surprised when they land in hell.

At the time labor and capital are in a clash, then it is that Jerusalem (the church) shall be searched, as it were, with candles. Consequently, the men who have settled in their houses, those who act as though the Lord has forsaken the earth shall have their punishment.

Not only do we behold and feel the day of the Lord approaching but even hear Its Voice.

OPENING REMARKS AND PRAYER

I shall read from "The Mount of Blessings," page 177. We are now beginning a new chapter entitled, "Not Judging but Doing." It is based on the scripture which says, "Judge not that ye be not judged."

M.B., pg. 177 – "The effort to earn salvation by one's own works, inevitably leads men to pile up human exactions as a barrier against sin. For, seeing that they fail to keep the law, they will devise rules and regulations of their own to force themselves to obey. All this turns the mind away from God to self. His love dies out of the heart, and with it perishes love for their fellow-men.... The atmosphere of selfish and narrow criticism stifles the noble and generous emotions, and causes men to become self-centered judges and petty spies....

"'Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.' We cannot read the heart. Ourselves faulty, we are not qualified to sit in judgment upon others. Finite men can judge only from outward appearance. To Him alone who knows the secret springs of action, and who deals tenderly and compassionately, is it given to decide the case of every soul...."

What a wonderful lesson this reading holds for all Christians, and especially for ourselves. And now let us pray that God help us not to judge others; not to look for faults, not to make mountains out of mole hills, and not to criticize; not to set ourselves up as criterions. Let us pray that we may know that God has called us to teach the Truth, not to whip people into It. No, no more than to drive them out of It. God has asked each one to be watchman only of his own deeds. If we do this we will have our hands full; no room for more. The only watchman over His people God has ever placed are His prophets, under His Own supervision.

THE HATED JEWS OF TODAY NOT THE ADMIRED JEWS OF TOMORROW

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,
MINISTER OF DAVIDIAN 7TH-DAY ADVENTISTS
SABBATH, JANUARY 4, 1947
MT. CARMEL CHAPEL
WACO, TEXAS

We are here to study Zephaniah 2, beginning with the first verse.

Zeph. 2:1, 2 – "Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired; before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you."

Of all the verses in this chapter, these two are the most difficult to place. Some years ago I heard a preacher give an exposition on the first three verses, isolating them from the rest of the chapter and connected them with other passages of the Scriptures. He gave an excellent discourse, and endeavored to show that the "nation" mentioned in verse 1 is God's church and that "the decree" is that of the two horned beast's of Revelation 13:15-17. The study was well presented and the thoughts he brought out looked plausible enough, but as we now know that the Scriptures cannot be rightly understood isolated from their continuity, we need to study these verses first in connection with the chapter itself.

Let us note that the nation in question is to gather

itself together; that she is not desired; that the anger of the Lord is to fall upon her; and that she is to gather herself together before the decree brings forth and before the anger of the Lord falls upon her.

What makes this nation gather together? – Certainly not the decree and not the Lord's anger, for these are to come upon her after she gathers together. The "decree" certainly cannot be the beast's decree, for there is not even a thought in the scripture that would so indicate; but it certainly points out that the decree is none other than the Lord's decree – the fierce anger of the Lord in the day that passes as chaff.

According to the verse that follows, this undesirable nation's gathering together, is a sign post to God's people, urging them to continue seeking Him so much the more:

Verse 3 – "Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought His judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger."

When this Judgment-bound nation begins to gather together then it is, if never before, that the meek of the earth need to seek meekness.

The meek of the earth are those who have wrought the Lord's judgments, who have proclaimed the message of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. They are His people, His church. The nation that is not desired, therefore, is one people, and the meek of the earth, the church, those who are hid in the day of the Lord's anger are another people. The one is gathering together, the other is seeking meekness. Definitely, then, the "nation" of verses 1 and 2 is not His

church, but the people of verse three are His people, His church.

Let us now read verses 1 and 2 connectively with verses 4 and 5, omitting verse 3, the verse which has reference to the church.

Verses 1, 2, 4, 5 –"Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired; before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you.... For Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon a desolation: they shall drive out Ashdod at the noon day, and Ekron shall be rooted up. Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea coast, the nation of the Cherethites! the Word of the Lord is against you; O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant."

The fourth verse definitely implies that the "nation" is to gather together in the cities of Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Ekron, in the land of the Philistines, in the land of Canaan – in Palestine.

In view of the fact that this scripture is now being unfolded, and also the fact that there is but one people, one nation (the descendants of the ancient scribes, priests, and Pharisees who rejected the Lord and who have not even to this day accepted Him, that are hardly desired anywhere in the world) that is now doing all she can to gather together in Palestine – in view of all this, the present-day Jews are that undesired nation. Upon her, therefore, the Lord's anger is to fall if she continues to deny Christ. Yes, the universally hated Jew is the only nation that has been scattered throughout the Gentile world, and is the only one that is now gathering together in Palestine.

Moreover, in these verses, two truths stand out clearly: (1) that in vain the Jews seek to establish themselves in the Promised Land; (2) that we who are bearing the message of the great and dreadful day of the Lord are counselled to seek meekness and righteousness, for thus only shall we "be hid in the day of the Lord's anger," that is, merely bear knowledge of the message will not save us, there should be corresponding deeds with it.

Let us now connect verse 3 with verses 6 and 7, the verses that are applicable to the people of God, the meek.

Verses 3, 6, 7 – "Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought His judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger…. And the sea coast shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds, and folds for flocks. And the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed thereupon: in the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening: for the Lord their God shall visit them, and turn away their captivity."

Now, the fact that the Lord is to destroy all the inhabitants in the land of the Philistines (Zeph. 2:5), and at the same time make it dwellings for "shepherds, and folds for flocks," shows that He is first to drive out of the land all the wicked, all those who are not seeking meekness, then He is to set up the "house of Judah" in it.

Verse 8 – "I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the revilings of the children of Ammon, whereby they have reproached My people, and magnified themselves against their border."

Not only the unbelieving Jews, but also the unbelieving Arabs who resist the meek, are to be swept away from the land.

Verse 9 – "Therefore as I live, saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles, and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation: the residue of My people shall spoil them, and the remnant of My people shall possess them."

While Moab and Ammon become as Sodom and Gomorrah, go out of existence, the captivity of God's people is turned away. They become an independent nation and possess all the wealth of the people round about.

Verses 10, 11 – "This shall they have for their pride, because they have reproached and magnified themselves against the people of the Lord of hosts. The Lord will be terrible unto them: for He will famish all the gods of the earth; and men shall worship Him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen."

Verses 12, 13 – "Ye Ethiopians also, ye shall be slain by My sword. And He will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness."

Verse 14 – "And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her [in Nineveh], all the beasts of the nations: both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their voice shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the thresholds; for He shall uncover the cedar work."

Who wants to ignore the truth that these conditions

are definitely pre-millennial? Moreover, these prophecies show that the renewal of the ancient kingdom of Judah is to be a real thing, not something imaginary. Its subjects are to be real people, not ghosts. Now we can see that the common expression, "going to heaven," means first going to the Promised Land, there to be fitted for the society of the pure and eternal.

Verse 15 – "This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss, and wag his hand."

The capital city of Assyria (the power that rules the people) is to become a desolation. This Nineveh is evidently the antitype of ancient Nineveh, as is the Babylon of The Revelation the antitype of ancient Babylon.

The summary of this chapter is this: The hated Jews of today are not to be the admired Jews of tomorrow. The means which the Jews now pursue to gain admission to Palestine are not the means that would establish them there for ever even if they should succeed in getting there. The only Jews and Arabs that may remain in the land will be those who seek the Lord, the God of Moses.

And the only people that will get there are those who will stay there. The land is reserved for the kingdom of antitypical Judah. The nation and the kingdom that will not serve her "shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." Isa. 60:12.

Since we are now definitely and directly counseled

to seek meekness and righteousness, we dare not neglect our opportunity. Moreover, we are not left to conjecture as to what is required of us in order to prepare for the great and dreadful day of the Lord. But let us remember that if we invent barriers of our own, regulations by which automatically to force ourselves into obedience of the Word in accordance with our own preconceptions, we would be working out nothing less than our own righteousness. We must not be like the Pharisees of old, and must not judge others by our prescribed human standards. We are not to mount the judgment seat and not to encroach upon another's conscience, not to judge another in matters that lay between the soul and God. All we are called to do is to teach and practice the Truth for today, to let the people make up their own minds for or against It. We are not to force them into anything.

Let us remember that it is concerning just such a spirit and practice of intruding upon the conscience of others that Jesus said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matt. 7:1). We have no right to enforce our opinions and our views upon others. Just because others do not come up to our expectations and ideals, is by no means good reason to condemn them in order to help them. Far from it. "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God." 1 Cor. 4:5.

"...Their lives were to magnify the power of a Saviour who could justify them by His righteousness.

"But gradually a change came. The believers began to look for defects in others. Dwelling upon mistakes, giving place to unkind criticism, they lost sight of the Saviour and His love. They became more

strict in regard to outward ceremonies, more particular about the theory than the practice of the faith. In their zeal to condemn others, they overlooked their own errors. They lost the brotherly love that Christ had enjoined, and saddest of all, they were unconscious of their loss. They did not realize that happiness and joy were going out of their lives, and that, having shut the love of God out of their hearts, they would soon walk in darkness….

"It is not the opposition of the world that most endangers the church of Christ. It is the evil cherished in the hearts of believers that works their most grievous disaster, and most surely retards the progress of God's cause. There is no surer way of weakening spirituality than by cherishing envy, suspicion, fault-finding, and evil-surmising." – "Acts Of The Apostles," pp. 548, 549.

Aside from Ezekiel (God's mouth piece) God delegates no other to be a watchman of the people:

"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the Word at My mouth, and give them warning from Me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Again, when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness

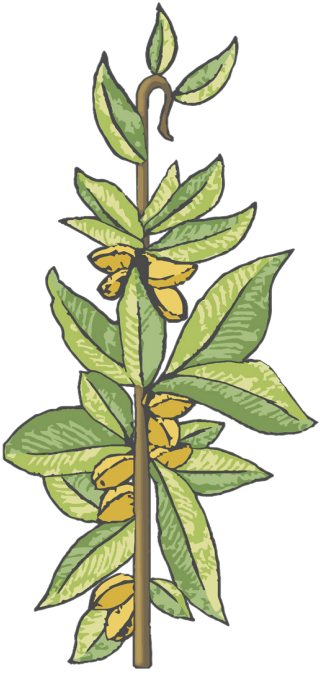
which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul." Eze. 3:17-21. In short, we are not to covet the throne "upon the mount...., in the sides of the north." Isa. 14:13.

And ever remember that if the Truth Itself cannot persuade the sinner to repent, force and human effort will do less good and much harm. Our time is too short and our work too great to engage in matters that are foreign to our duty. We cannot afford to waste our strength picking flaws in others. Let us get ready for the kingdom, for there is a church and a world to save, and God is anxious that we get down to business and very quickly if we are to be among the admired Jews of tomorrow and live in perfect peace under everlasting security.

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UNIVERSAL PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 7613
WACO, TX 76714
+1 800-729-7494
www.davidiantoday.org



VOL. 1 N^{OS}. 21,22
Printed in the United States of America