TIMELY GREETINGS

— The Only Peace of Mind —

Vol. 1 Nos 36,37,38

"COMFORT YE, COMFORT YE, MY PEOPLE"

THE END OF YOUR LONG AND TRYING JOURNEY

IF NOT AWAKENED NOW, THEY MAY SLEEP FOREVER

TEXT FOR PRAYER

The Narrow, Upward Road

I shall read from "The Mount of Blessing," beginning on page 198 with the second paragraph:

"The narrow, upward road leading to home and rest, furnished Jesus with an impressive figure of the Christian way. The path which I have set before you, He said, is narrow; the gate is difficult of entrance; for the golden rule excludes all pride and self-seeking. There is, indeed, a wider road; but its end is destruction. If you would climb the path of spiritual life, you must constantly ascend; for it is an upward way. You must go with the few; for the multitude will choose the downward path.

"In the road to death the whole race may go, with all their worldliness, all their selfishness, all their pride, dishonesty, and moral debasement. There is room for every man's opinions and doctrines, space to follow his inclinations, to do whatever his self-love may dictate. In order to go in the path that leads to destruction, there is no need of searching for the way; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad, and the feet naturally turn into the path that ends in death."

We should pray for power to enable us to turn aside from the broad path, from following self – the path in which we find ourselves from birth up. We should pray to choose the narrow path with the few, to know for a certainty that only the narrow, upward way leads to home and to peace.

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V.T. HOUTEFF

"COMFORT YE, COMFORT YE, MY PEOPLE"

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,
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SABBATH, APRIL 12, 1947
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Last week we finished studying the thirty-fifth chapter of the book of Isaiah. And now since, as can be readily seen, chapters 36-39 inclusive, interrupt with historical data the theme of Isaiah's prophecy, we shall continue where Inspiration picks up the thread of thought in chapter 40 with a tender plea to God's message-bearing people:

Verses 1, 2 – "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."

Verse 2 leaves no doubt that Inspiration is speaking to a people in the latter days, – the days in which the warfare, pilgrimage, and captivity of God's weary people are accomplished. Having received double for their sin and rebellion, their iniquity is pardoned and are now soon to be delivered. You cannot afford to overlook this comforting message. You must not neglect to make ready, for that is the reason that it is now unsealed and freely delivered to you. Prepare to meet thy God is its key note.

Verse 3 – "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

True, verse three found fulfillment in the work of John the Baptist; but the verses preceding and also the verses following, definitely apply to the people in the latter days and only partially to the people in John's day. Therefore the truth stands out boldly that the direct fulfillment of this chapter is found in our time, thus making John's work an ensample of our work – John's work the type, ours the antitype.

The "wilderness" and the "desert" (verse 3) in contrast to the "vineyard," the house of Judah literally and antitypically says: "The voice of him that crieth in the land of the Gentiles, that says, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the Gentile world a highway for our God."

Verse 4 – "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain."

To make this highway straight, "the voice" is, as it were, to raise up the valleys, cut through the mountains and hills, and grind down the rough places; that is, every obstruction must and will be removed, the saints must be gathered regardless where they live.

Verse 5 – "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

This shall come to pass as soon as the highway is made ready.

Verses 6-8 – "The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the Spirit of the Lord

bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the Word of our God shall stand for ever."

"The voice" proclaims that all are grass, that all the goodliness in men is as the flowers of the field, but the Word of God stands forever. It must be, then, that men are blind to these realities, else they would not need be reminded of them. It must be that they are depending upon flesh, instead of upon the Word of God and His Spirit.

Verses 9-11 – "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him: behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."

The message which this chapter contains, we see, is not a message to be preached to the world, but to the cities of antitypical Judah, the church. And those who proclaim it are citizens of antitypical Zion and Jerusalem, members of the church. They are fearlessly to lift up their voices with strength.

They are to explain that the people whom God uses to get His work done are "His arm"; that they are to rule for Him; that His reward is with Him, and His work yet before Him; that He shall feed His flock, and with His arm (with His church) He shall gather the lambs (the newly converted) and carry them to His kingdom.

Verses 12-20 – "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counsellor hath taught Him? With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of judgment, and taught Him knowledge, and shewed to Him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, He taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto Him? The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved."

Those who are ignorant of God liken Him to something. But the great question is, to what are we likening Him – to something though there is no comparison of Him?

Verses 21-26 – "Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: that bringeth the princes to nothing; He maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be

sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and He shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble. To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold Who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth."

O, how great a God our God is! And how slow we are to grasp His promises. How slow we are to let Him take full charge of us just as He has charge of the stars.

Verse 27 – "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?"

Obviously God's people are mistaken concerning His knowledge of their ways.

Verses 28-31 – "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

These verses explain that God's people need to know all these things before they earn the right to

walk into His Holy Kingdom. And what a wonderful privilege is ours if we but wait on the Lord, if we but remain true and faithful to His Word. Then He shall renew our strength like the eagles; we shall run, and not be weary; we shall walk and not faint.

As the great and dreadful day of the Lord is fast approaching, and as we are already told what to do to make ready, we need not be found wanting. "Surely His salvation is nigh them that fear Him; that glory may dwell in our land.... Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before Him; and shall set us in the way of His steps." Ps. 85:9-12.

What a comforting message this is! Any wonder why the Almighty urgingly commands: "Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people."

THE END OF YOUR LONG AND TRYING JOURNEY

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,
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SABBATH, APRIL 19, 1947
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Our subject for this afternoon is found in the fifty-first chapter of Isaiah, beginning with the first verse.

"Hearken to Me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you...." Isa. 51:1, 2.

In this chapter God is speaking to the descendants of Abraham, to a generation that is following after righteousness. We now need to find in the stream of time the exact generation which Inspiration here addresses.

Is it the people of Moses' time? of Isaiah's time? of the Apostles' time? of our time? or of some other time? If the chapter is addressed to us, then our need of studying it, and our interest in it, will be infinitely greater than it would be otherwise. The information we are seeking is found in verse seventeen–

"Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of His fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out." Isa. 51:17.

This verse reveals that God is speaking to a people who have gone through all the trials – hardships, captivity and persecution allotted them to go through for their sin and disobedience – they have drunk of the dregs of the cup of trembling and even wrung them out. At long last there are no more dregs left in the cup. This, of course, could not be said to the people in Moses' time, nor in Isaiah's time, nor even in the Apostles' time. It could not be said to any people at any time but to those who have come to the time of their liberation from want, fear, and insecurity which they have created through their sin and rebellion. Their Divine calling to awake, however, reveals that though the time of deliverance has come, yet they are in deep spiritual sleep – ignorant of these good tidings.

"Thus saith thy Lord the Lord, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of His people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of My fury; thou shalt no more drink it again." Verse 22.

God, you see, positively addresses a people who have already taken all the punishment they are to take, and at long last He is pleading their cause. This cannot be said at any time to any people heretofore. How do we know that the time is here and that the Lord is now speaking to us? We know it from the fact that these long concealed prophecies on the subject are now for the first time unfolded and brought to attention. We are now ready to study the chapter verse by verse.

Isa. 51:1, 2 – "Hearken to Me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him

alone, and blessed him, and increased him."

God advises His people of today to hearken unto Him. They are those who are endeavoring to obtain righteousness, those who are seeking the Lord, and who are anxious to have a revival and reformation among them. They are now urged to look to the rock whence they are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence they are digged.

We are not to conclude that the Jews are the only descendants of Abraham. Those who are fortunate enough to have this revelation brought to them, are the people. There is no other safe conclusion if God causes the prophecies to be written, sealed, and then unsealed at His will and at the time appointed. The Jews, therefore, are not the only descendants of Abraham. To find who these seekers of righteousness really are, there are several genealogical facts to consider: (1) Only the citizens of the kingdom of Judah (the two-tribe kingdom, Judah and Benjamin) received the title Jews. (2) Those of the ten-tribe kingdom (the kingdom of Israel) were scattered among the nations, and there they completely lost their identity. (3) The Christian church herself is an upshoot of the Jewish church and nation – the Apostles and her followers, up to about 35 A.D. were all Jews. Then it was that again a multitude of Jews lost their identity by calling themselves "Christians." Comparatively speaking, only a few Jews, from the Kingdom of Judah, have preserved their national title, Jews.

The descendants of the early Christian Jews and the descendants of the ten tribes, down the stream of time must have increased to a great innumerable multitude, for Abraham's seed was to be as the sand

of the sea for multitude. It is, therefore, obvious that the few identified Jews of today are not the only descendants of Abraham's, but that many of the Gentiles must be of Abraham. Since this mixed up situation exists, hardly any one can really say for sure that he is not one of Abraham's children. Perhaps many of the nations whom the world calls Gentiles are the children of Abraham. We do not know for sure who is who. God, however, has kept a perfect genealogical record, for He says: "I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know Me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there. And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the Highest Himself shall establish her. The Lord shall count, when He writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah." Psa. 87:4-6.

Furthermore, though one be of Gentile blood, if he truly accepts Christ he by his spiritual birth becomes of the seed of Abraham for says Inspiration, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. 3:29. The children of Abraham here addressed, therefore, are not to be sought among the identified unbelieving Jews, but among the Christians. They are admonished to look to Abraham and Sarah, and to consider that when God called Abraham, though he was alone, he nevertheless obeyed and God blessed him; that in spite of all the apparent impossibilities with both him and Sarah, He increased him. What if you personally and alone were called by His word, as was Abraham, to stand alone for Truth and righteousness, would you be a hero for God as was Abraham, or would you do as did backsliding Judas Iscariot?

If we were not privileged to choose as was Abraham,

God would not have reminded us of Abraham's experience. We are plainly told not to lose courage, but to have faith in God, for He intends to bless and increase us, as He blessed and increased our ancestors, Abraham and Sarah. The reason He gives for blessing us as He blessed them, is this:

Verse 3 – "For the Lord shall comfort Zion: He will comfort all her waste places; and He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody."

The focal point of the Scriptures is the rebuilding of Zion, and that is our charge.

Verses 4, 5 – "Hearken unto Me, My people; and give ear unto Me, O My nation: for a law shall proceed from Me, and I will make My judgment to rest for a light of the people. My righteousness is near; My salvation is gone forth, and Mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon Me, and on Mine arm shall they trust."

We are asked to hearken to the Lord because a law and a judgment are to proceed from Him. These are to be "a light to the people." Again, says the Lord: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations,

and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Isa. 2:2-4.

The law is to go forth when the mountain (Kingdom) of the Lord's house is established on the top of the mountains (kingdoms), and when It is exalted above the hills. Then the "light" shall cause the rebuked nations to flow to the mountain of the Lord. And, too, instead of beating their plowshares into swords, and their pruninghooks into spears (Joel 3:10), they will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Isa. 2:4.

To say, "My righteousness is near," and "My salvation is gone forth," is to say that salvation has been here, but righteousness is about to come. And how true!

What is the Lord's "arm" that judges the people? This we shall see as we read–

Verse 9-10 – "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon? Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?"

How illogical it would be for God to be trying to awake Himself, as though He, or His own arm, is asleep! This verse shows that He calls the Exodus

Movement His arm. Rightly so, because God does His work with His servants. His servants, therefore, are His arm, and they shall judge (rule) the people, and the people shall trust on them.

Verse 6 – "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but My salvation shall be for ever, and My righteousness shall not be abolished."

We are necessarily reminded that all else shall perish, but those who obtain God's salvation and His righteousness shall stand forever.

Verse 7 – "Hearken unto Me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is My law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings."

Those who know His righteousness, the people to whom this Truth is revealed, and who have His law in their heart, obviously will suffer from reproach and revilings of men, but they are admonished not to fear. And what shall be the end of their adversaries? – Here is the answer:

Verse 8 – "For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but My righteousness shall be for ever, and My salvation from generation to generation."

Painfully we pity our Laodicean brethren who are so angrily, but blindly, against us.

Verses 9, 10 – "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm

of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon? Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?"

If His people were not asleep, then what need would there be for calling them to awaken? We are glad that God Himself is arousing us and plainly telling us that as our forefathers did great things, we, too, as the Lord's "arm," can and shall do even greater things than they.

Verse 11 – "Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away."

Thanks be to God that He is not only to awaken His people and to cause them to sing while marching into Zion, but is also able to remove their sorrows and their mourning forever. He is well able to put everlasting joy upon their heads.

Verse 12 – "I, even I, am He that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass."

In an endeavor to show us how absurd it is to fear men that shall die as does grass under foot, Inspiration in this verse emphasizes the promised comforts of verse 11. It must be that with some the fear of men is great. Now that we have God's Word and comfort let us fear Him Who only is to be feared.

Verse 13 – "And forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?"

When we begin to fear man, just that moment we forget God. The question, "Where is the fury of the oppressor?" implies that in reality there is not any, that it is only a bluff.

Verses 14, 15 – "The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail. But I am the Lord thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: The Lord of hosts is His name."

Yes, the captives hope for their release, but God does not hope for the sea itself to divide, He divides it at will and causes His people to go through on dry ground.

Verse 16 – "And I have put My words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of Mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art My people."

Here we have God's own statement that the words we speak are the words of Truth direct from Him. Moreover, He assures us that His hand, His care and keeping, are around us; that by this means He may plant the heavens, lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, "Thou art My people."

Verse 17 – "Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of His fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of

trembling, and wrung them out."

Awake, awake, my friend to the fact that our captivity, our sorrow and our mourning are about over; we are never again to go through them. He Who divides the sea can indeed make us free.

Verse 18 – "There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up."

Zion's past and even present condition is now brought to view for our consideration. What a desolation! What a terrible state for a church to be in after having brought forth many converts! There is not a one to give her a helping hand!

Here we are told that the laity in Laodicea are not of any spiritual help to the mother (the ministry) – no, not even one endeavors to lift his hand to help the ministering brethren, – they are all more or less in agreement to stay "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Rev. 3:17.

Verse 19 – "These two things are come unto thee; who shall be sorry for thee? desolation, and destruction, and the famine, and the sword: by whom shall I comfort thee?"

David of old was given to choose one of three things: "...So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land?..." 2 Sam. 24:10-13. Now, in like manner God's people are asked

to choose either desolation and destruction, or famine and the sword. Then unlike in David's day, He Himself solves our problem if we let Him.

These are some of the things which God's people have gone through, even how some of these things still surround them. Our hope, nevertheless, is in God's deliverance.

Verses 20-22 – "Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net: they are full of the fury of the Lord, the rebuke of thy God. Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine: Thus saith thy Lord the Lord, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of His people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of My fury; thou shalt no more drink it again."

Shall we not be thankful to know that everyone whose name is found in the book shall be delivered even from the time of trouble into which we are soon to enter? – Michael shall stand up for His people (Dan. 12:1)? Once He gathers us, he shall never again scatter us.

Verse 23 – "But I will put it [the cup of His fury] into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over."

The tables are turned: What God's people once had to take from their enemies, their enemies must soon take from them. Let us therefore not neglect to take advantage of God's plea of deliverance.

Yes, my friends, since our long and trying journey is at an end let us as God's "arm" give earnest heed to His awakening call. Now at the end of our long and trying journey, let us allow nothing to hold us back from obtaining the two things that are to make us stand forever – God's salvation and His righteousness.

We are now asked to choose either to stand on God's side or on the side of His adversaries (those whom we fear); those who are doing everything to close our eyes to God's Truth for this time – either to choose God, His Spirit and His revealed Truth, or to choose men, desolation and destruction, the famine and the sword.

TEXT FOR PRAYER
The Broad Way Is a Deception

I shall read from "The Mount of Blessing," beginning on page 199, with the first paragraph–

"But the way to life is narrow; and the entrance strait. If you cling to any besetting sin, you will find the way too narrow for you to enter. Your own ways, your own will, your evil habits and practices, must be given up if you would keep the way of the Lord.... All along the road that leads to death there are pains and penalties, there are sorrows and disappointments, there are warnings not to go on.... It is true that Satan's path is made to appear attractive, but it is all a deception; in the way of evil there are bitter remorse and cankering care. We may think it pleasant to follow pride and worldly ambition; but the end is pain and sorrow. Selfish plans may present flattering promises, and hold out the hope of enjoyment; but we shall find that our happiness is poisoned, and our life embittered by hopes that center in self...."

We need to pray this afternoon for a realization that with our sins we cannot enter the Highway of Holiness (Isa. 35:8- 10). No, not with our evil habits and practices. These must be discarded if our ultimate end is to be in Paradise. We need to know that though the broad way appears flowery, it is only a camouflage. It appears strewn with roses, but underneath are thorns – sorrows, pains and disappointments of all kinds. We are to pray that we get a vision of the necessity to depart from the highway on which the born after the flesh travel and get on the highway which the born after the spirit travel.

IF NOT AWAKENED NOW, THEY MAY SLEEP FOREVER

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,
MINISTER OF DAVIDIAN 7TH-DAY ADVENTISTS
SABBATH, APRIL 26, 1947
MT. CARMEL CHAPEL
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Our subject for this afternoon is found in Isaiah, chapter 52. We shall begin with the first verse.

Isa. 52:1 – "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean."

At the time this awakening call goes forth throughout the land, Inspiration announces that the harvest time has arrived for the angels to put out and to keep out of Zion and Jerusalem the uncircumcised and the unclean, a work which Inspiration variously entitles: (1) cleansing of the sanctuary (Dan. 8:14), (2) purify the sons of Levi (Mal. 3:1-3), (3) purification of the church ("Testimonies," Vol. 5, pg. 80), (4) Judgment in the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17), (5) harvest (Matt. 13:30), casting out the bad fish from among the good fish (Matt. 13:47, 48), separating the sheep from the goats, – the Judgment for the Living.

The sinners, we know, have always been and are still among God's people. That the fulfillment of this Scripture, therefore, is in the very near future, is shown from the fact that the truth of this chapter is now unsealed and carried to the church, endeavoring

to awaken the people of God and to impress them with the fact that soon the harvest will commence – first separating the firstfruits, the 144,000 from "the house of God," then to be followed by the second fruits from all nations (Rev. 7:9); the scripture also shows that the sinners will no longer walk with the saints and that the harvest ends the world (Matt. 13:39). Stop, think, and read over again Isaiah fifty-one and fifty-two. Do not pass hastily over this life and death subject.

Who is the Lord calling to awake? – Zion and Jerusalem. Why not the house of Judah, the house of Israel, or some other? Who is Zion? and who is Jerusalem? Here are the answers: In Isaiah's time Jerusalem was the capital city of the kingdom of Judah, and on Zion stood the palace of the kings. And what could they antitypically represent? – Comparatively speaking, "Capital Hill," the nation's executive mansion of the United States ("the Whitehouse"), we might call the Zion of the United States; and the capital city of the nation, Washington D.C., we might call the Jerusalem of the United States.

The Lord, however, is not addressing the United States, and as Zion and Jerusalem are in this instance personified, their counterparts therefore are as follows: The General Conference, the "Capital" of the denomination must be the Zion of today; and the local conferences, the under-rulers, must be the Jerusalem of today. Who, then, is asleep and is being called to "Awake?" – The General Conference and the local conferences, – the executive branches of the denomination! And if they were <u>not</u> asleep, why would Inspiration be calling them to "awake?" Moreover is it not true that they are blind to these scriptures? They treat them as if they were not in the Bible at all. Does it not look to you that their preaching of having the whole

Truth, the last message, of being in need of nothing more, is but self-deception? Is not the message of the Judgment for the Living the last instead of the Judgment for the Dead? And is not the former ever so much more important than the latter?

The statement, "Put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem," plainly shows that Zion is weak, and that Jerusalem is either naked or clothed with filthy, ugly garments. Now to transpose these terms from their figurative setting to the actual, what could "strength" stand for if not for faith in the fulfillment of these prophecies? The Master said that without faith you can do nothing, but with it you can remove mountains. Faith, therefore, is what Zion and Jerusalem need today. Faith itself is as invisible as air, but when put into action it can remove even greater obstacles than air can remove when it is put into action. Though we cannot see wind, we can feel it and see the <u>results</u> of its power. So it is with faith.

Next to consider are the garments. The garment of a person is the first thing that attracts the eye. The "beautiful garment," therefore, must represent something which transforms the appearance of the wearer from being spiritually ugly and filthy in appearance to being spiritually beautiful and admirable. What then, can it represent other than true Christian character, – goodness, love, mercy, and justice, – that which is visible and which makes a person likeable and truly a respectable Christian.

The "strength" and the "garment," together, therefore, are nothing less than the righteousness of Christ – faith's action and its results. These are the prerequisites which Zion and Jerusalem of today need.

These they need now because "henceforth…the uncircumcised and the unclean" – the unbelieving and the unforgiven sinners, those who do not have the "beautiful garment" on, shall be bound in bundles for the fire, no more to be found among the saints.

Verse 2 – "Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion."

Zion and Jerusalem of today are not only naked, but they are filthy: they lie down in the dust, as it were, are still in captivity and do not even know it! And so the daughters of Zion and Jerusalem, the denomination as a whole, is asked to arise from the dust, and to sit on her throne, to free herself from the yoke of her captivity, the bands of her neck. She needs to realize that the day of her redemption is now here, and that she is now to be made free, never again to be ruled by men.

Verse 3 – "For thus saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money."

As this verse needs no comment, let us proceed with–

Verses 4, 5 – "For thus saith the Lord God, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause. Now therefore, what have I here, saith the Lord, that My people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the Lord; and My name continually every day is blasphemed."

These verses remind Zion and Jerusalem of today

that they are oppressing the laity no less than the Egyptian masters and the Assyrian lords oppressed the children of Israel. They make God's people howl, and thus they blaspheme His name and keep His people from coming in contact with God's Truth for this time.

Verse 6 – "Therefore My people shall know My name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am He that doth speak: behold, it is I."

Because God's people are mis-ruled, mislead, and abused, and His name blasphemed, He declares that He will not leave them in ignorance: He promises that regardless how hard the carnal rulers of unsifted Zion and Jerusalem try to keep the people in ignorance of this sifting message, He will, in spite of it, cause His people to hear and to know that it is He speaking, not an enemy as they are told.

What does God think of this message and of His messengers? Let us read–

Verse 7 – "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"

What better tidings than these would a people want while in their captivity? If this message, the Kingdom of God (the church purified), is not a message of peace and security, then tell us what Inspiration means by saying that the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, the calf and the lion, shall lie down together, "and a little child shall lead them." "And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." Isa. 11:6; 33:24.

Verse 8 – "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion."

All God's servants shall together, and with joy, exalt His message (the Voice), because when the Lord again brings Zion they shall see eye to eye. What a difference between Zion's watchmen of tomorrow, and her watchmen of today among whom hardly two actually see eye to eye! "Only those who have withstood temptation in the strength of the Mighty One will be permitted to act a part in proclaiming it [the Third Angel's Message] when it shall have swelled into the Loud Cry." – "Review and Herald," Nov. 19, 1908.

Verses 9, 10 – "Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted His people, He hath redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."

When these things take place, then all the earth shall see the salvation of our God. But now let us hear His counsel as to what He would have us do:

Verse 11 – "Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord."

Those who bear God's Truth must be clean; they must be freed from every cord that binds them to the things of this world.

Verse 12 – "For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rereward."

Our going into the land of our fathers, we are here told, is not to be in fearful haste or flight, because the Lord Himself shall go before us, and He shall be behind us.

Verses 13, 14 – "Behold, My servant shall deal prudently, He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonied at thee; His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men."

These verses, as you know, have long been applied to the Lord. He nevertheless, does not do all these things personally, but He does them through His messengers. Now note, in verse 13 we are told that the Lord is greatly exalted, whereas in verse 14 we are told His visage was marred and His form more than the sons of men. "He hath no form nor comeliness;...no beauty that we should desire Him." Isa. 53:2. Why? – The only answer that can be given to the question, is this: God knows that the people's sinful nature urges them to make idols of men. They easily fall for men who can put forth a good front. They act as though they were baptized in the names of these modern Pauls and Apolloes. They are followers of pride and pomp rather than followers of God and His progressive Truth. To break them away from this folly, God sends His Truth through unsuspected ones. Thus contrary to their liking and expectation it is written that the Lord had no form nor comeliness; but in spite of it, He shall "be exalted and extolled, and be very high."

Verse 15 – "So shall He sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at Him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider."

He is to sprinkle (cleanse – Ezek. 36:25) many nations. Those who will not turn away from following the pride of man will be led to fall in the ditch, so to speak. Every vain person shall drop out through the "sieve of vanity," but the followers of Truth and righteousness shall live forever. None of these things have ever been told to any. It is, therefore, very important to stop, watch, and listen, to diligently follow Truth Itself. Know that the vain make display of themselves, of their achievements, and especially of their religion. Know that they do this in order to draw the hearts of their audiences to themselves, to get a following, to exert their influence, to put something over. The Pharisees in Christ's day were very proficient in this heart-stealing profession. They prayed on the corners of the streets to be seen by men, and thus they deceived them beyond reclamation.

"Behold, the name of the Lord cometh from far, burning with His anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: His lips are full of indignation, and His tongue as a devouring fire: and His breath [His message for today] as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err." Isa. 30:27, 28.

Ancient Israel wanted the tallest man in the land to be their king, and they got him. He would have led them into ruin, though, had it not been for the ruddy and unpretentious David who delivered them from the Philistine army and from their giant.

It is a common practice among Christians to make idols of men. This is recognized even by the ministry of other denominations. A certain minister, speaking on "Religion in Life," told his radio audience that he stopped at a service station to refill his tank one day. While there, the attendant thought that the minister's voice sounded familiar, and asked: "Are you the man I have been listening to every morning on the radio?" As soon as the attendant heard the minister say yes, he emphatically retorted: "I am disappointed in you; I thought I was listening to a preacher about six feet tall, weighing not less than two hundred pounds, but now I see you are only a little runt." This practice is typical among Christians.

BRIEFLY TO SUMMARIZE OUR STUDY: We see that the time of purification of the church is at hand; that Zion (the General Conference) and Jerusalem (the local conferences) are called to "awake," so that the daughter of Zion, the church, might be clothed with the righteousness of Christ; that she is weak; that she has not the righteousness of Christ; that the day of her redemption is now at hand; that she is to be freed from man's rule and from hypocrisy; that Zion and Jerusalem as they are today, are no less oppressing the laity than were the Assyrian lords oppressing the children of ancient Israel; that God will not leave His people in ignorance; that they shall know it is He speaking, not an enemy as they are made to believe; that the message of the Kingdom of God is a message of comfort; that His faithful servants shall exalt His message (the Voice); that after Zion and Jerusalem awake they shall see "eye to eye," and only those who have withstood temptation in the strength of the Mighty One will have a part in proclaiming this message in the Loud Cry ("Review and Herald," Nov. 19, 1908); that then all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation

of our God; that God sends His Truth, not through those who are exalted and idolized by men, but through unsuspected servants; that those who do not turn from man shall fall, whereas the followers of Truth and righteousness shall live forever; that it is a sacred duty of all Truth-bearers to proclaim the message to all the brethren, for if they be not awakened now, they may sleep on forever.

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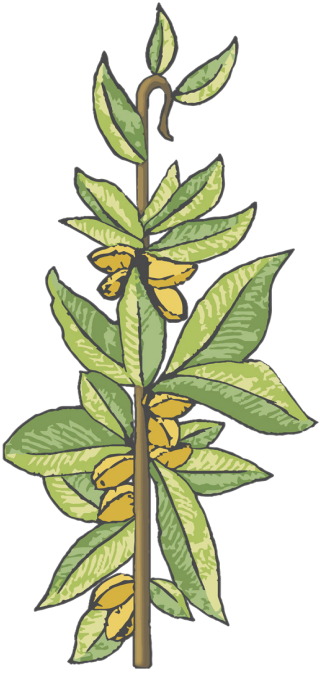

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