

1 TG #10

Text of Study by V. T. Houteff
Sabbath, October 12, 1946

Mt. Carmel Center
Waco, Texas

Prelude: Orchestra

Opening Song: "Who Will Volunteer?"

Let us pray the Lord's Prayer.

Lord's Prayer: Congregation

Opening Remarks

I shall read from "Mount of Blessings," beginning with the last paragraph of page 159.

M.B., pp. 159, 160. "The kingdom of God's grace is now being established, as day by day hearts that have been full of sin and rebellion yield to the sovereignty of His love. But the full establishment of the kingdom of His glory will not take place until the second coming of Christ to this world. 'The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven,' is to be given to 'the people of the saints of the Most High.' They shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them 'from the foundation of the world.' And Christ will take to Himself His great power and will reign.

"The heavenly gates are again to be lifted up, and with ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of holy ones, our Saviour will come forth as King of kings and Lord of lords. Jehovah Immanuel 'shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one.' 'The tabernacle of God' shall be with men, 'and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.'

"But before that coming, Jesus said, 'This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations.' His kingdom will not come until the good tidings of His grace have been carried to all the earth. Hence, as we give ourselves to God, and win other souls to Him,

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we hasten the coming of His kingdom. Only those who devote themselves to His service, saying, 'Here am I; send me,' to open blind eyes, to turn men 'from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins; and inheritance among them which are sanctified,'--they alone pray in sincerity, 'Thy kingdom come.'

This tells us that those who pray in sincerity, "Thy kingdom come," who devote themselves to God's service, whose lips are touched with the coals from the altar (see themselves as sinners), and who then say, "Here am I; send me," are the only ones who are worthy to be sent into God's vineyard today. Their work is "to open blind eyes, to turn men 'from darkness to light,' and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified."

When we say, "Thy kingdom come," we are in reality saying that we are doing everything we can to make it so; we are laboring for it incessantly; we are complying with the Lord's will as are the angels.

How ironic it is for one to pray the Lord's prayer while doing otherwise than working for its fulfillment! It is like a person saying, "Let me have your hand," while he at the same time brushes it away. Such a prayer is just one form of blasphemy. We should pray that we conform ourselves to God's will, do His work, and be His alone.

Brother Vancy Smith, will you lead us in prayer?
And Oliver, will you follow, please? I shall close.

Prayer: Vancy Smith, Oliver Hermanson, and V. T. Houteff

Special Song: "The Bible Satisfies"--Sister Berolinger and
Sister Mills

My subject for this afternoon is

REVIVAL AND REFORMATION

In "Life Sketches," page 425, we read:--

L.S., p. 425-- "I have been deeply impressed by scenes that have recently passed before me in the night season. There seemed to be a great movement--a work of revival--going

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forward in many places. Our people were moving into line, responding to God's call. My brethren, the Lord is speaking to us."

Here is a forecast that a great movement is to carry on a work of revival in many places, and that the people will respond to God's call. In other words, the envisioned work of revival was seen to be carried by a great organized movement, not by a man here and a man there. Moreover, the author says that the movement was from God, not from man.

We have through the years seen many persons and groups of persons in different parts of the field staging what they term a "revival and reformation," but not one of those persons has ever been able to accomplish much, if anything. They just quit in disgust. And it will also be noted that rather than being revived and reformed for the better, the church is seen sliding closer and closer to the level of the world's standards after each such revival.

We all can see clearly that the revival which "Life Sketches" here predicts is yet future, for we have never in the existence of the author's writings seen such a revival. Therefore we must expect it to take place.

The Bible contains the complete plan of salvation for all humanity. How do I know this?--I know it because its story begins with creation, and ends with the new earth. Between the first and the last pages of the Bible, then, lies the complete formula for man's salvation. And if a revival and reformation are to take place in the world between those two events (creation and the new earth), then the material for such a work must be found somewhere in the pages of the Bible.

But before we read what Zechariah the prophet has to say on the subject, I think we should define what the words "revival" and "reformation" mean. For "revival" the dictionary gives: "To restore; to refresh; to renew; to re-awaken; to re-establish." And for "reformation" the dictionary gives this definition: "To make better morally; change for the better." "Christ Our Righteousness" defines these terms thus:

C.O.R., p. 154-- "A revival and a reformation must take place under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection

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from spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend."

What is the difference between "revival" and "reformation"?--The former in a special sense means to bring back the spiritual to life, to quicken the mind and the heart to the up-building of the spiritual part of life, to re-establish, to repair. The latter means to change for the better, to reorganize the moral powers under the guidance of the Divine.

There is given in the Bible but one example--type--of such a revival and reformation. We find it recorded in the books of Haggai and Zechariah.

Before Haggai and Zechariah were called to the prophetic office, many of the Jews returned from their Babylonian captivity to Jerusalem, although the majority remained in Babylon.

You remember that the Jews were released from their captivity by Cyrus when Babylon fell. Then he made a decree that the Jews should go back to their homeland to repair the desolations and the ruins. He especially decreed that the rebuilding of the temple and the re-establishing of the worship of the God of Heaven should be done speedily. Thus we see that a revival of the spiritual part of the nation was their main burden. According to Ezra 4:24, both this decree and also a second decree which was issued a few years later were frustrated; and in the second year of the reign of Darius, King of Persia, the work ceased.

What finally did make the completion of the project possible?--Referring again to sacred history, we find that in the second year of Darius, just at the time the work was stopped, the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, were called to revive the work of the deserted project. This record you will find in Haggai 1:1 and Zechariah 1:1. The result was that within four years the temple building was finished; whereas all the efforts which had been put forth previously covering over thirty years, failed. (See Ezra 6:15.)

Let us now realistically consider why all the first efforts of the people, and even the decrees of the king failed, and why

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the final effort succeeded.

The builders voluntarily went from Babylon to Jerusalem, because the kings so decreed and because the captivity of the Jews had ended. But the work did not prosper, though the prophetic period of their captivity had passed, until the God of heaven Himself directed through His prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, just how the work was to be done. In other words, not until the Lord Himself thus sponsored the work, did it prosper. In fact, nothing has ever prospered without His Own personal direction: Nothing has ever prospered in God's work without the Spirit of Prophecy.

For example, Moses understood from his childhood that he was to deliver the children of Israel from Pharaoh's brickyards. And when Moses was fully grown and thoroughly trained in the courts of Pharaoh, he went to deliver Israel. But he failed utterly. Forty years later, however, when God Himself endowed Moses with the Spirit of Prophecy, and sent him to do the work, he triumphantly led the Hebrew captives out of Egypt.

From this we see that no matter how hard men may try to bring about a change--a revival and reformation--among God's people, their efforts are bound to fail, if God Himself does not take the endeavor in His Own hands.

Now, as to what took place after the house of God had been built, let us read--

Ezra 6:19, 20-- "And the children of the captivity kept the passover upon the fourteenth day of the first month. For the priests and the Levites were purified together, all of them were pure, and killed the passover for all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves. And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the Lord God of Israel, did eat."

Let us now connect Ezra's record with Nehemiah's.

Neh. 10:28-32-- "And the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the

Nethanims, and all they that had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, every one having knowledge, and having understanding. They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our God, and His judgments and His statutes. And that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons: and if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the Sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy of them on the Sabbath, or on the holy day: and that we would leave the seventh year, and the exactions of every debt. Also we made ordinances for us, to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God."

We should now summarize those things which were revived, and also the reforms which were then effected. These were revived: (1) The house of God was rebuilt and the sacred services were re-instituted; (2) the old wastes were rebuilt, the city was re-established; and (3) the walls were stretched round it. Such a revival of dead works was never launched since men fell in sin.

And these were the reforms which then took place: (1) The priests and the Levites were all purified; (2) all the children of the captivity separated themselves from the filthiness of the heathen; (3) all having knowledge and understanding, "clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse and into an oath, to walk in God's law," to observe His judgments and His statutes. They promised that they would not give their daughters to the people of the land, nor take their daughters as wives for their sons; (4) they made Sabbath observance a strict rule; and (5) they promised to give a third part of their dollars to the house of God.

It was indeed a time of real revival and reformation.

But what does their revival and reformation have to do with us today?--Practically everything, because Haggai and Zechariah only indirectly prophesied of a revival and

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reformation that was to take place in their day, and they more directly prophesied of an infinitely greater one to take place in our day. To this effect the prophet writes:--

Zech. 2:4,5-- "And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein: for I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her."

The wall which they built round Jerusalem then was a stone wall, but the one here predicted is to be a wall of fire.

Verse 8-- "For thus saith the Lord of hosts; After the glory hath he sent Me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth thee toucheth the apple of his eye."

In that day the Lord did not send anyone to the nations, but in the day this prophecy takes place, He will send some one.

Verse 9-- "For, behold, I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants; and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me."

In those days no nation was spoiled to its servants, but in this our day, we already see nations spoiled and being spoiled. Thus it is that labor and management are warring everywhere, and communism permeates the nations as does leaven the dough.

Verses 10, 11-- "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be My people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee."

In those days no nation joined itself to the Lord. But in the day He dwells with the daughter of Zion many nations shall be joined to the Lord.

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Verses 12, 13-- "And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again. Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord: for He is raised up out of His holy habitation."

Yes, when the nations shall join the Lord in the Holy Land, then it is that He shall inherit Judah and again choose Jerusalem. And He declares that He is already raised up out of His holy habitation to accomplish all this.

Now let us pass to the eighth chapter, and read from the seventh verse down.

Zech. 8:7-- "Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Behold, I will save My people from the east country, and from the west country."

And now--

Verses 20, 21-- "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also."

The prophet's attention was directed to a time when the Lord is to gather His people from both the east and the west, to a time when one city's inhabitants will invite another's to go to the Holy Land.

Verses 22, 23-- "Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you."

The ten men may be symbolical as are the ten virgins of Matthew 25. If so, then a people as a body will speak all the languages of the nations. Their taking hold of the one that is a Jew, and saying, "We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you," definitely shows that someone, a descendant of the Christian Jews, will proclaim

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God's ingathering message in the time of the end.

Let us turn to--

Zech. 9:9-- "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."

Plainly, the prophet was given a vision concerning the first advent of Christ and also concerning the "daughter of Jerusalem." These terms point out the fact that the Christian church is the offspring of the Jewish church--the offspring of Zion and of Jerusalem.

Verse 10-- "And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and He shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth."

That is, He would bring the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah to an end, and then turn to the Gentiles.

Zech. 12:3,8,9-- "And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem."

That is, after the destruction of the ancient kingdoms, Israel and Judah, He will re-establish His kingdom, as shown in Ezekiel 36 and in other portions of the Scriptures. When this takes place, Jerusalem will be a burdensome stone for all the people of the earth, but they who burden themselves with Jerusalem shall be punished, be cut in pieces; for the Lord will defend His people. Then it is that even the most feeble among the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be

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as willing and as capable as ancient David was. And the house of David, the kingdom that is to be set up, shall be as the angel of the Lord before the people.

Zech. 14:2-5-- "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city."

Since Zechariah's prophecy was only partially fulfilled in the days the Jews returned from Babylon to Jerusalem, and since this prophecy speaks interchangeably of two such movements, the latter movement being greater than the former, the truth is that the latter is the antitype of the former. In other words, the revival and reformation of Zechariah's time is a type of a revival and reformation in our time, and therefore their experience must be our experience.

The same means which wrought that great reformatory work in Zechariah's day, are to make the reformatory movement successful in our day. Likewise the failure of the efforts which were anciently put forth by the reformers before the Lord called Zechariah to the prophetic office, before the Lord Himself took the work in His Own hands, demonstrates the failure of the efforts put forth by reformers in our day. In other words, just as the work in the type was unsuccessful before the Lord took the reins in His Own hands, so in the antitype any attempt at starting a revival and reformation before the Lord takes the reins in His Own hands, would end unsuccessfully.

From this we are warned that it is useless to agitate revivals and reformations while we ourselves know not what to revive or what to reform from.

It is commendable that we should endeavor to lift the standard, yet it certainly is not in God's order for us to "work up" something we know not what, and call it a revival and reformation.

In conclusion, let us summarize the three great points which our study of this afternoon has definitely made clear to us: (1) that a work similar to that done in Zechariah's day constitutes the great revival and reformation that we are to expect and whole-heartedly enter into; (2) that without