

their racial background.

As evidence of His wonderful love, God condescends to answer Zion's objection and to relieve her from her despair.

#### God's Answer

The Lord's answer to Zion's complaint is given in three sections. The first of these, which runs from verse fifteen to verse twenty-three, is the longest. It begins with the figure of a woman's relation to her child: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." God declares His relationship to His people. He has begotten them Himself and He bears a relation to them even closer than that of a mother to her own tender child.

Verse sixteen continues the assurance of the permanent relation which God holds to His people. He has engraved them upon the palms of His hands. Their protection is ever before Him.

After this assurance God gives the wonderful promise which begins in verse seventeen. Its essential element is the prediction that the children of the Lord are not to come to an end but are, in fact, to be wonderfully increased in number. The destroyers and enemies of God's people are to be crushed and driven away, but the children of Zion will form a splendid ornament for her. Zion can look back on the glorious days of King David when the kingdom was so prosperous and successful that it appeared as if nothing but glory was ahead for the people of God. As she looks back on the spaciousness and wonder of her situation at that time and thinks of the present condition of her former headquarters--a heap of ruins, desolate, and filled with vast unpopulated areas--she is assured by the Lord that not merely will the good old days return but that they will be far surpassed. The land which appeared so expansive and all sufficient for the people of God in those glorious days will even appear too small in days to come. The children which she will have, to replace the others who have been lost, will say in her ear, "This place is too small for me. Give me more space" (verse twenty).