

in verse twenty-one.

The future reaction of Zion to this situation is described. She will seem unable to comprehend it. She will say, "Who has begotten me these, seeing that I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, one wandering to and fro? who has brought up these?" The fact that Zion is called one wandering to and fro (or "driven away") is clear proof that the word here does not represent a place, but that it is a personification of the people of God. Her former children have disappeared, but the time is coming when she will have great numbers of new children and will ask in amazement, "Whence have these come?"

At this point we inevitably are reminded of the wonderful promise of Isaiah 29:22-23* that Jacob will see children whom God Himself has created ("the work of mine hands") and will praise "the Lord who redeemed Abraham." John the Baptist declared "that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Matthew 3:9). Abraham was redeemed by the power of God. It was not mere natural generation which made Abraham a part of Zion, but ~~it was~~ God's wonderful grace. God, ~~by His~~ ~~grace~~, is promising here that in the future He will bring many new ones from sources utterly unsuspected at present and that He Himself will cause them to be born into the family of God. ~~Here in Isaiah 40:20~~ ^{49:21, like Isaiah 29:22-23, presents} ~~we have~~ another wonderful promise of what Paul predicted when he spoke of the grafting of new wild branches into the olive tree of God's grace, so that the Gentiles would have a part in the inheritance of Abraham (Romans eleven).

In verses twenty-two and twenty-three the Lord vividly points out how the kingdom is to be extended. Many of the leaders of the Gentiles are to be "nursing fathers" and "nursing mothers" to the new children of Zion; they will bow down before the Lord and will perform their part in upbuilding the family of God.

This, of course, does not mean that in all periods of the future the people of God are to seem to be successful. Plainly enough there will be ups and downs, times of progress and times of seeming defeat, but over the centuries this promise has been abundantly fulfilled. God has used ~~the very~~ ^{many} kings of the earth--some of them voluntarily through ~~the~~ love of God, others against their will--as His instruments in building

*See discussion of Isaiah 29:22-23 in the "Bible Today" for (), 1943.