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## Signs of the Times

*"And the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll." - Isaiah 34:4; Rev. 6:14.*

OVER FIFTY years ago Brother Russell offered a most illuminating comment on the significance of the above mentioned Scriptures. In view of present day events his words, as we review them here, come with all the freshness of an up to the minute "View from the Tower," which many of us so long enjoyed. We quote:

"The 'sure word of prophecy' indicates very clearly that the various Protestant sects will form a cooperative union or, federacy, and that Catholicism and Protestantism will affiliate, neither losing its identify. These are the two ends of the ecclesiastical heavens which, as their confusion increases, shall roll together *as a scroll* (Isa. 34:4; Rev. 6:14) for self-protection-as distinct and separate rolls, yet in close proximity to each other.

"For this desired end Protestants show themselves ready to make almost any compromise, while Papacy has assumed a most conciliatory attitude. Every intelligent observer is aware of these facts; and every reader of history knows the baneful character of that great antichristian system that now sees, in the great confusion of Protestantism, its opportunity for readvancing to power. And, though realizing in itself a strength superior to that of divided Protestantism, the great Papal system also fears the approaching crisis, and hence desires most anxiously the union of Christendom, Papal and Protestant, civil and religious." - S. S. *Vol. IV, pages D258, D259.*

In London, England today (August 3, 1946) the *Associated Press* informs us that a four-day conference of international church leaders, is to commence tomorrow (August 4th)

### **"PROTESTANTS SEEKING PEACE LINK WITH VATICAN"**

Under this illuminating caption the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* informs us that:

"Protestant leaders of eight nations disclosed today they favor joint action on world problems by Protestants and Roman Catholics, based on some kind of satisfactory understanding at the highest level, presumably between the World Council of Churches and the Vatican.'

"Replies to a questionnaire on policy of the World Council pointed, up a Protestant plan to seek collaboration with the Roman Catholic Church in putting a world Christian viewpoint on peace' problems before the statesmen of the world. The announcement said that, unless some highlevel agreement was reached, the extent of cooperation would fluctuate 'with changing personalities and you never know where you are.'

"The questionnaire was answered by representatives of Protestant bodies from the United States, England, Scotland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Denmark, and The Netherlands.

"One reply, referring to relations with the Vatican, said that 'cooperation with Roman Catholic bodies seems difficult.' This reply noted that 'cooperation with Jewish bodies has increased.'

"Another said that 'collaboration with the Roman Catholic Church on matters of world order needs to be prepared sympathetically and with an understanding of that church's difficulties and background.'

"It must,' this reply said, 'be preceded by conversations between the highest courts on both sides, and must also include a discussion of the alternative theories of the relationship between church and state.'

"If such an approach should break down, the reply continued, the question of collaboration should not be taken up 'on a mere humanistic or "good neighbor" basis.

"John Foster Dulles of New York, chairman of the Federal Council of Churches Commission on a Just and Durable Peace, who is expected to be named chairman of the conference, has said that 'parallel action' of the Catholic Church and, the World Council at least would be sought.

"The only group identified in the responses to the questionnaire was the New Zealand Council of Churches which said that in New Zealand 'there has been no experience of collaboration with Jewish bodies, and the national council would probably not favor such an approach, which could not, in the nature of things, be on a thought-out Christian basis.'

"The New Zealand group added, however, that 'there is good evidence of friendly relations between Christian and Jew on the individual level.'"

In considering the foregoing it is not difficult to see that the ecclesiastical powers, referred to in the Scriptures as the powers of heaven, are being rolled together as a scroll before our very eyes. "But, 'while they shall be folden together as *thorns* [for there can be no peaceful and comfortable affiliation of libertyloving Protestants and the tyrannical spirit of Papacy] and while they are drunken as drunkards [intoxicated with the spirit of the world, the wine of Babylon], they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry' (Nahum 1:10) in the great cataclysm of trouble and anarchy predicted in the Word of God as that which will introduce the Millennial Kingdom."

How different the Kingdom for which we have so long prayed from the condition of affairs on this earth today. As Brother Russell inquires:

"Do the Prophets portray any such condition of things in the glorious- Kingdom of God? Will the great Prince of Peace go about imploring the nations to recognize his authority and grant him his rights-of territory, of wealth, or of dominion? Will he beg a pittance from the poorest peasant or court the favor of the affluent? Or will he implore his subjects to bestir themselves and exert their dying energies to support his tottering throne?' Oh, no; with dignity and authority, when the appointed time comes, he will take unto himself his great power and begin his glorious, reign; and who shall hinder or obstruct his way?" - S. S. *Vol IV, page D267.*

Brethren, lift up your hearts. Our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. "The time is at hand and the effect of every vision. Ezek. 12:23.

- *P. L. Read.*

## **Modern Babel**

### **The Fictitious Peace**

MR. WALTER Lippmann a columnist of international reputation, in a recently, widely publicized article attempts valiantly to explain away the spirit of frustration, disgust, and disillusionment that has today seized upon the peoples in every corner of the globe as a result of the complete failure of the conferences of the United Nations to agree upon any plan for human betterment -- a betterment which would be acceptable to all the powers concerned and would restore peace and security to a world that is heart-sick with longing for a permanent settlement which would permit time to heal the wounds of mankind and allow it to devote itself once more to the peaceful pursuits of every-day life in a world forever free from war's alarms.

Mr. Lippmann's explanation 'is in effect a statement that this generally felt disappointment at the failure of human hopes and expectations' is no new thing, nor will it be of an enduring nature. He points out that in the history of the United States, every war in which the country has engaged since the American Revolution has been followed by a recurrence of the same kind of frustrated, let-down feeling as that which permeates all human society today. This condition, he writes, is occasioned by the loss either through death or by the retirement from public life of the brilliant leaders who had steered the ship of state through the critical war period, and their replacement by second-rate men who had neither the vision nor the capacity to master the stupendous task of restoring the country, or as in the present case, the world to a condition of normalcy. Therefore, he argues our best and indeed our, only course is to possess our souls in patience until some of the younger statesmen develop and mature into capable leaders, when again all, will be right with the world. These optimistic -conclusions have been eagerly grasped at by many as a satisfactory word of consolation and encouragement to the world's bewildered ones.

However, to others who view the future with less optimistic minds, Mr. Lippmann's explanation sounds suspiciously like a case of whistling in the dark, and fails entirely to take into consideration certain new factors which have complicated presentday world problems, factors which were never present before. It is far from the intention of the Lord's people to rob mankind of any degree of consolation they may derive from any such favorable outlook for the world's future, but both from the standpoint of those who would like to save Babylon from her impending fate and from that of those who recognize the inevitability of her destruction, the present world sickness is of far too serious a nature to be dismissed so casually. Before the eyes of those whose dependence has been placed upon the "sure word of prophecy," the signs of the times are daily multiplying to show that the hours of the great sick system miscalled "Christendom" are numbered. The handwriting has already appeared on the wall, and the tread of the advancing legions of a far greater deliverer than Cyrus may even now be heard by those who are watching and listening.

### **RUSSIA-A NEW FACTOR**

It has lately become customary on the part of both press and public to blame the representatives of the Soviet Republic for their refusal to fall in with the plans suggested by the Anglo-American delegates and for their persistence in vetoing any proposal which fails to meet with the full approval of the Russian leaders who direct from Moscow the course of their delegates. Thus far no such plan has been formulated, and consequently every conference meeting has ended in a deadlock. To those, however, who are conversant with the mental bias of the Russian leaders, as they view all non-Communist nations, this result occasions no great surprise. The course of the Russian delegates is, quite consistent with their more or less, openly avowed principles. The

dictators of Russia believe, whether rightly or wrongly, that all the efforts of the democratic powers are directed toward a return of the world to very nearly the same *status quo* as that which prevailed in the pre-Hitler era, with -the United States and the British Commonwealth of Nations taking the places vacated by Germany and Japan. This arrangement, the Soviets do not intend to tolerate, and therefore they obstruct at every step of the way every suggestion put forth by the representatives of, the western powers.

### **DO THESE THINGS MATTER TO US?**

At this point it might be well to pause for a moment and consider the merits of a question which may have suggested itself to some in connection with these matters. The question is, What concern have God's people with these things? We are of that highly favored group whose attention and interest is focused upon the unseen things of the spirit, and whose longing desire is for the passing away of the present evil world with all its sin and selfishness. What concern have we with a study of the characteristics of a heathen nation which is destined to be broken' in pieces like a potter's vessel. Such a study makes dull reading for those whose hopes and aspirations are fixed upon a kingdom which cannot be moved, and which, please God, will soon assume control over all earth's affairs.

The answer, of course, which should be obvious to every Bible student, is to be found in the fact that it is only by observing the course of history that we are able to see the fulfilment of prophecy. Had not the first World War warned us that the feet of the great metallic image had been smitten and were beginning to crumble, we could scarcely have been quite sure that our understanding of the prophecies relating to the close of Gentile times had been the correct one. And it has been through our observation of subsequent events that we have come to realize what a long period of testing and' patience was to elapse between 1914 and the complete establishment of God's Kingdom upon the earth. It might be perhaps a desirable happening from the standpoint of .the .flesh, if we were all able to drop off to sleep today and wake up in Kingdom glory with all the events coincident with the breaking up of the great Gentile image, things of the past. If such were really our Father's arrangement, that would doubt- less be our happy lot. However, it would seem to be his will that many of his people should be destined to witness these events while still in the flesh, and perhaps to take some part in them. Let us then not emulate the attitude of the supercilious Gallio who "cared for none of these things." (Acts 18:17.) Let us rather delight in tracing the wondrous workings of our God who is able to make even the, wrath of men too praise him.

Returning, then, to our consideration of the Russians, we find it indeed difficult to believe that the character and actions of a people who have become so prominent in world affairs in one of the most crucial periods of all history, and whose ideology contrasts so forcibly with that, of every other nation, should have been entirely ignored by the inspired 'writers of the Bible, and never referred to either directly or in language veiled in metaphor or allegory. Such a supposition is hard to accept, especially when we reflect that all or at least many of the actors who play a part in this great world drama are in some way alluded to in the prophetic Scriptures. We know that there exist certain obscure passages in the Books of Isaiah and Joel, particularly, which the march of events may yet show to have been written for the purpose of enabling the servants of God to recognize these mysteriously acting enemies of great Babylon for what they are and for what, part they are destined to play in the downfall of the present world order.

But to leave the realm of speculation alone, and to confine our study to a subject that is neither of a speculative nor inferential nature, namely the behavior of the Russian delegates at conferences which ostensibly were designed to insure future world security -- their attitude as all know has

proved to be a stumbling-block to all efforts to arrive at a settlement of world affairs which would insure some kind of a peaceful world-order for at least the immediate future.

It is difficult for the one whose training in the school of Christ has been to think no evil and whose instincts revolt against the thought of ascribing to any of his fellow-men principles which violate his every conception of not only Christian but of ordinary civilized behavior between man and man, to make the statement which follows. Yet as the past quarter century has shown, there exist in the world of today; certain ideologies professed by seemingly intelligent and even apparently kindly people which set at defiance every rule of conduct which enlightened people for centuries have regarded as being fundamental to all decent and honorable human relationships. And it is with one of such ideologies that we have to do in the present instance.

It must ever be borne in mind that what we have to say relates not to the rank and file of the Russian people, who unfortunately are completely subservient to the will of their dictators, but rather to those men who rule that vast country with a rod of iron and whose mandates are obeyed without question by every Russian.

### **THE COMMUNISTIC IDEOLOGY**

Every member of the clique which governs Russia today is in heart and soul devoted to the interests and aims of the Communist Party. Let us quote from the text of an article which recently appeared in the columns of the "Boston Globe," and which deals with Communistic doctrine and methods:

"It is not a breach of Communist principle to lie, cheat, forge, make fools of rotten liberals, betray friendships, make united fronts only to subvert them, or indulge in any means whatsoever to defeat non-Communistic policies. . . . The avowed object of the Communist is to win against all odds and by any means, victory for an idea that has for him the compelling force of a crusading religion. To him the individual is, nothing, the interests of the party the only thing that matters, and all personal scruples (concerning such virtues as justice and fair dealing with his opponents) are but remnants of a sickly bourgeois morality.

To the Communist all forms of religion are incompatible with advanced thought; his conceptions are entirely materialistic, and deny all supernatural phenomena. Although partly in deference to the wishes of some of the older generation of Russians who had never become reconciled to the abolition by -the Bolsheviks of all organized religion, and partly as a political measure designed to offset the disadvantage of being regarded by the Western World as an Atheistic State, permission was recently granted to reopen the churches for the benefit -of those who craved some form of public worship. The practice of religious observance is still contemptuously regarded by the Russian leaders as a more or less harmless superstition suitable only for old people.

In the field of politics the Communist regards as the chief threat to his ultimate determination to accomplish the economic salvation of mankind by the spread of his doctrine, those Semi-socialistic systems such as the present government of Britain in which labor unions play a prominent part and which strive to obtain redress of all grievance through the peaceable form of the ballot. These, the Russians realize, are in diametric opposition to the Communist program of violent revolution and dictatorship. Thus when Messrs. Byrnes and Bevin meet the Russian delegates, Messrs. Molotov and Vishinsky, across the council table, they represent two basically different philosophies of life, and consequently fail completely to understand each other's habit of mind.

## **THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TABLE**

But the frank and ruthless determination of the Russians to take advantage of their position as conquerors, and to exact full reparation for the injuries their country has suffered, is not the only obstacle to the peaceful settlement of the world's difficulties. The chief, almost the only reason for the meeting of the various representatives of the great powers has been in order to put an end for all time to war as a means of settling international differences. Everything else was supposed to be subordinate, to that primary purpose. Yet the facts are that up to the present time not even the first preliminary steps have been agreed upon to accomplish this much to be desired end. The whole time at every meeting has been devoted to squabbling and haggling over the disputed ownership of various pieces of territory, the inhabitants of which have had less than nothing to say about which great power shall exercise sovereignty over their hapless country. As one writer has pointed out:

"Humanity is helpless against other forces than atomic energy. More people are being destroyed or dehumanized today in a world nominally at peace than were killed in all the bombings of the war. Forced deportations of populations, slave labor compounds, and concentration camps, are the commonplaces of life in Eastern Europe."

Another writer cites an instance of a Czech citizen, a Sudeten German, who was married to a Jewess. When the Germans came, they recognized him as German, and demanded only that he divorce his Jewish wife. This he refused, so he and she were sent to separate concentration camps for all the war years, and miraculously they both lived through it and rejoined each other in liberation and love in their own home in Prague. Now he is arrested because he is a German, and will be expelled from his country, while she is told that she may remain on one condition, that she divorce her husband. This she will not do, having learned from him that love is stronger than death. So if they live, they will both tread the way of exile and misery once again. Could any incident testify more eloquently to the confusion which reigns in great Babylon today or cry more loudly for the world's need of Messiah's Kingdom?

Why is it that the chosen representatives of nations that almost without exception would claim to be Christian countries have been able to accomplish so little in the way of bringing about a world arrangement that at least would outlaw that dreadful recourse to armed conflict which has already brought the civilized world to the very brink of universal ruin? They have been explicitly warned by scientists and statesmen alike that this is civilization's last chance, that in view of the invention of that most terrible of all weapons, the atomic bomb, another world war would mean the complete destruction of everything that human ingenuity has been able to accomplish in the last four hundred years and would force mankind to recede into the darkest of the dark ages. Yet European, American, and Slav alike wrangle and fight over questions that are in the ultimate analysis mere trifles when considered in the light of the desperate urgency of the situation.

## **PRIVATE VS. OFFICIAL INTEGRITY**

It may possibly be true that all the delegates alike are in their private lives high principled, honorable men, whose personal integrity and honesty is beyond question. Yet as no student of world politics can have failed to notice, there exists paradoxically a wide gap between the character and conduct of an individual representative and the iniquities and shady acts he will countenance, if indeed not favor, in the supposed interests of his country. In their official capacity, and acting as a group, these men will in the name of expediency consent to shameful deeds of brigandage, cruelty, and oppressions, which were they scaled down to the dealings of private citizens, they would themselves regard as unforgivable crimes. How accurately the Divine

Revealer of secrets (Dan. 2:28) forecast the true character of the Gentile kingdoms when in Daniel's vision (Dan. 7:3) he portrayed them as cruel rapacious beasts.

It becomes daily more apparent that far from this universal state of discouragement and bewilderment being as Mr. Lippmann professes to believe, a mere temporary phase. which will soon pass away, it is on the contrary, clearly symptomatic of the fact that great Babylon is suffering from an incurable disease which can have but one termination. Society's physicians, called in to prescribe a remedy, are blindly devoting so much time to fighting each other; that it now seems likely that the patient will pass away while the doctors dispute over the proper, treatment to use. In the meantime, while the politicians wrangle over rules of procedure and concerning the ownership of territory that the countries they represent have not a shred of just or moral claim to the possession of, famine and disease reap a harvest of misery and death throughout Eastern Europe and Asia in spite of all efforts to relieve starvation conditions. Thoughtful men everywhere are regarding with blank amazement the monumental stupidity and stubbornness of those leaders who seem bent upon bringing down all civilization into crashing ruin and chaos.

The Bible student who is considering these events can hardly fail to notice how closely the present course of the nations parallels that picture of Egyptian confusion portrayed by the Prophet in Isaiah 19:11-14. Truly "the Lord has mingled a perverse spirit in the midst of Egypt which has caused the Egyptians to err in every work, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit."

Were it not for the sure knowledge that God's Word gives us that the world's darkness and confusion are necessary lessons designed to prove to humanity that all the enlightenment and progress of which it has boasted can avail it nothing to avert the approaching catastrophe, we too would feel our hearts failing us for fear of the coming crisis. As it is, we cannot help but feel an impulse of sympathy and compassion going out to the poor groaning creation in all its blindness; and we pray ever more earnestly for the day; of its emergence into the "glorious liberty: of the sons of God."

### **WHAT NEXT?**

The failure of the peace conferences to make any headway in the task of reconciling the conflicting views of the opposing powers led many to expect an overwhelming, triumph for the Communists in the elections recently held in France and Eastern Europe. These expectations were not realized, greatly to the relief of most people. The conditions are evidently not yet ripe for the masses, to resort to violent revolution. The success of the British people in electing to power a Socialist minded labor government has had a strongly, encouraging effect upon those moderate liberals who still place their trust in the power of the ballot, as a means of attaining their ends. Communist propaganda thrives upon conditions of misery and hopelessness, coupled with a loss of faith in, the power of moderate methods -to alleviate the distress of the people. When the time comes for such conditions to obtain, and that time may not be far distant, we may expect to see the curtain rise upon some of the closing scenes of Babylon's long history.

In the meantime, we also who have the firstfruits of the spirit, even we groan within ourselves, waiting for the redemption of our body. (Rom. 8:23.) Let us pray that that day may not find us wanting.  
*- John R. Hughes*



## The Foal of the Ass

*"Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he hath washed his garments in wine, and his vesture in the blood of grapes: his eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk." - Gen 49:11. 12 A. R. V.*

IT HAS pleased the Creator of all good to give life to certain lowly creatures, which were designed to illustrate and demonstrate particular qualities of worth, for the instruction and benefit of his highest earthly creation, Man. Some of these creatures have been further eternally ennobled by their Maker, by his comparing them with himself or his Son.

Among these is the hen, compared apparently to both the Father and the Son, in Psalm. 91:4, 8, and in Matt. 23:37, respectively. Another is the ass's, colt, or foal, mentioned 'in the passage from Genesis quoted above.

Many of our readers will remember an excellent exegesis of the Messianic prophecy of this chapter of Genesis, contributed by Brother F. A. Essler, and published in the "Herald issue of August, 1943. This article evoked, from one of our subscribers in the antipodes, Brother E. F. Sowdon, Secretary of the Christian Union, E. Melbourne, Australia, some very interesting comments, as follows:

"It would be very difficult to pick out any one article as of outstanding merit, but there was one in the August issue that impressed me, viz., *The Shiloh Prophecy*. The clear manner in which Brother Essler brought out the vital points and linked them up together, and showed their application to the Lord Jesus, was indeed excellent. I feel sure others besides myself must have been he and encouraged by the masterly way in which the truth was expressed, and I for one would like a further exposition of that [portion] . . . of the prophecy which reads: 'Binding his ass to the choice vine,' etc... It is remarkable that Genesis 49:11, Zechariah 9:9 and Matthew 21:2 mention two animals: (a) a she-ass, and (b) a colt with her. Evidently this colt -- whereon never man sat -- was the offspring of the former and no doubt the one would naturally follow the other. We know, however; that Jesus only used one, viz., the-colt. The significance of this typical act is well known to Bible Students. It was in the usual kingly fashion that Jesus presented himself to the Jewish nation as their king, in exact accord with ;the prophecy of Zechariah.

"The point that I think links up the two prophecies lies in the fact that by the fulfilling of the one Jesus identified himself as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, as recorded in Genesis 49:11. But what does the Scripture mean by 'binding his foal unto the vine?' We all know that usually the last thing we would tie an animal to, and especially a young colt, would be *a vine*. It would be quite an easy matter for a colt to break loose from such a flimsy stake; therefore 'the whole matter must have a symbolic meaning. Taking this viewpoint, and calling to mind the Master's words recorded in John 15:1-5-, [the parable of The Vine and Branches] it is not difficult to see that, by the act of riding into Jerusalem on an ass's colt he 'bound,' or made secure, the prophecy of Genesis 49:11 to himself and his footstep followers who, as John points out, are members of the same Vine. The result of the reign of Jesus -- the 'Lion of the Tribe of Judah' -- and the Royal Priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 3:21; 20:1-4) will bring to mankind the blessings which Brother Essler so nicely pointed out in the latter part of his article, and which are also described in Revelation 21 and 22."

## COMMENT

We fully agree with Brother Sowdon's suggestions, which throw much light on the passage under consideration. In answer to his request for a further exposition, it would seem to us that by applying the principles of symbolic interpretation,, perhaps additional significance may be discerned.

Symbolic meaning is sometimes based on the derivation, or root meaning of a word; sometimes upon the usage of a thing. Domesticated animals are used by man for the furtherance of his purposes, hence symbolize his plans, his schemes. The horse was a war animal, little used, by the Jews as a beast of burden; hence it is written: "An horse is a vain thing for safety." (Psalm 33:17.) The ass, on the contrary, was in common use for both lading and riding, It is a peculiar fact that in the Hebrew Scriptures there is no word that means both male and female ass. They had separate names, corresponding to the, English terms "jack" " and "jennet." The name of the male had reference to his usual reddish color, or to his cantankerous disposition-the root from which the word is derived suggesting either or both. The name of the female ass -- sometimes translated "she ass" in the Authorized Version -- was derived from a root suggesting patience, in reference to this animal's usual docility.

God's plan for the Jewish people was that they should be a burden-bearer; hence his plan for them was well symbolized by, a she ass. The burden of carrying God's purposes -- his representation -- in an evil and hostile world, was a heavy one; but while Israel was faithful, Jehovah's care and provision was more than sufficient compensation -- as he said, unto Abram, the Father of the Faithful: "*I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.*" (Gen. 15:1.) Israel indeed proved fractious; her conduct was more often like that of the onager, the "wild ass" of the desert; hence the force of the reproach: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." (Isa. 1:3.) But we should remember that the symbol represents the ideal, God's plan for Israel, not her behavior. As the Apostle points out, Hagar, Abraham's servant and concubine, represents; fleshly Israel's covenant; and this is a cognate type. - Gal. 4:24, 25.

Our Lord declared that not "one jot or tittle" of the (Jewish); Law should pass away until all had been accomplished. He said, "I came not to destroy, but to fulfil, the Law and the Prophets." (Matt. 5:1,7, 18.) God's plans are immutable. Accordingly, Jesus, the flower and consummation of the Jewish race and polity, appeared as the great Burdenbearer, and thus "fulfilled all righteousness." "Surely he bath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows."

But Jesus, in his capacity of Savior and future Ruler of all mankind, was not to ride upon the female ass that symbolized God's plan for the Jews, a small segment of humanity. A new plan had been prepared for him, ready to hand, as was the symbolic foal. (Matt. 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; John 12:14, 15.) However, the plan provided by the Father was an outgrowth, an offspring, a development of the Jewish plan hence most fittingly symbolized by the *foal* of the ass. A parallel symbolism is that of the true Church, the Bride of Christ being referred to in prophecy as "the virgin *daughter* of Zion."

Our readers will have anticipated the glorious climax of this symbolic structure. Instead of binding his foal (plan) to the old Jewish fig tree, the, great Author of the plan foretold through. his Spokesman that it should be bound irrevocably to a new planting -- the Vine -- symbolic of the Christ, Head and Body.

Why the seeming, redundance of the prophecies of both Jacob (in Genesis 49) and Zechariah, in referring to both "foal" and "colt?" Is it purely poetical? Ah, no! The derivations of the words have deep significance. The "foal", of Genesis 49:11 and Zechariah 9:9 are translations of a Hebrew word meaning young ass, derived from a *root* meaning a *fresh burden bearer*. The "colt" of the former passage and the "foal" of the latter are renderings of the Hebrew word "*ben*", meaning *son*, as builder of the family name *and* honor. It *will* be noted that the same two Hebrew words are used in both passages, in the same order; but the translators of the Authorized Version and Authorized Revised Version have transposed the English words foal and colt, in rendering the Zechariah passage. If we make the translation uniform in each case, we find the foal, literally fresh-burden-bearer, mentioned first, the she-ass's colt or *son*, last. The meaning of the corresponding Greek words, and the order in which Matthew uses these terms, are the same; but the translator of Matthew follows the rendering of Zechariah's prophecy, rather than the more accurate one of Genesis.

Mark records that Jesus said that the colt ,the disciple-messengers would find tied ("bound") ready for his purpose, was one "whereon no man ever yet sat." The features of the Father's over all Plan which were symbolized by the colt, had never been ridden, or put into operation, by any man. It involved the selection of the Body of associates of the one who had been destined to first "ride" the Plan, and subsequently the "restitution of all things." It was an ass-foal; a fresh-burden-bearer. It also includes the thought of Sonship, (the colt "*ben*") saying in symbol: "I have appointed my Son heir of all things." The rider was the Son of God and the Son of Man specifically of Jewry. The Plan contemplated the building up ("Son-wise") of the glory of his Father's Name, and the restoration to life and happiness of his mother's breed. No man had ever previously operated on this plan. He was to be the "firstborn among many brethren."

Translating the basic prophecy of Jacob freely, with due regard for the symbolic meaning, we may read:

"The tribal designation ["Jews"] shall not depart from Judah,

"Nor authority from his posterity,

"Until he comes whose right it is,

"And unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be.

"Binding his new plan of burden-bearing to the *Vine*,

"The outgrowth of his People's Covenant-Charter to the purple [blood] grape-vine,

"He hath washed his garments in wine,

"And his vesture in the blood of grapes:

"His eyes shall be red with wine,

"And his teeth white with milk."

With an instantaneous change of symbolism, what a picture the prophecy gives us in the last two lines, of "him whose right it [the sovereignty] is," the risen and triumphant Christ! He has been "perfected [as a Son] by the things he suffered" -- imbibing the wine of strong immortal-life-

giving doctrine from his Father, symbolically speaking, makes his eyes red, or to shine. He has been prepared for his service to mankind by his experience in elementary human, things, as he drew milk -- sustenance -- from his mother's breast. "His teeth are white with milk."

The desire of the Bride -- the Shulammitte of the Song of Songs, which is Solomon's -- has been fulfilled. He is her brother, as well as her Bridegroom -- he has "sucked the breasts of her mother" -- Humanity, and, the Sarah Covenant, for whom the gentle Mary' stood. Well may the Bride sing of him:

"My beloved is white and ruddy,

"The chiefest among ten thousand.

"His head is as the most fine gold;

"His locks are bushy and black as a raven.

"His eyes are like doves beside the water-brooks,

"Washed with milk, and fitly set. . . .

"His aspect *is* like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.

"His mouth is most sweet;

"Yea, he is altogether lovely.

"This is my beloved, and this, is my friend,

"O daughters of Jerusalem."

Song of Solomon 8:1; 5:10-16.

- *H. E. Hollister.*

## Near to the Heart of God

*"My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land." "As the hart panteth for the water brooks, so panteth my soul for thee, O God," - Psa. 63:1; 42:1.*

IN THESE expressions, of heart desire for nearness to God, there is something more than the intellectual craving for the Infinite -- the natural desire and impulse of the human mind to seek a perfect object for its thought. It is something more even than the aspiration of a sinful and disappointed soul towards moral beauty and sinless holiness. It is the personal longing for intimate communion with the living God. To come into vital contact with God, not as a Remote Thought, but as a Living Person; to feel that he who made the universe is not only the Eternal Wisdom but the wise God, not only the Infinite Love but the loving Father; to be assured by touch of soul that he is an ever present Reality, and to receive the gentle flow of his affection within the channel of the heart -- this is the water of everlasting life, the only draught that can truly quench the craving of the spirit. The assurance of immortality is not enough. For if we were told that we are to live forever and still be without God, eternity stretches before us like a boundless desert, a perpetual and desolate orphanage. It is divine companionship that the spirit needs first of all and most deeply."

This is the meaning of our Lord's beatitude in Matthew 5:6, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." So long as such hunger of heart continues to be an active factor in life, so long will the joy of finding God and his righteousness go on expanding into greater visions and richer experiences. The hunger of heart is sure to be rewarded by the discovery that "of all the myriad moods of mind" there is no other occupation of its powers "so dear, so beautiful" as longing after the living God. When he draws a soul by the wonders of his grace, and works within that heart a will to seek his face, how precious the revelations can be by which his spirit will bear witness, to an adoption into his divine family.

How wonderful to be within that circle and have 'the sense. of such a nearness to the heart of God! It is his will that we might always enjoy such realized nearness to himself. It is the privilege of his children to know that:

*"There is a place of comfort sweet,  
Near to the heart of God.  
A place where we our Savior meet,  
Near to the heart of God."*

Those who have been begotten from above by the Word of truth, and whose hearts are the good soil for that Word, instinctively yearn for a closer communion with the God who gave it. They also recognize that since God is a pure and holy Being only those who are pure in heart may have nearness to him; therefore they long to experience the purifying influence of his presence. Knowing also that God is love and may be seen only through the eyes of pure love, the prayer is for that closeness of fellowship with him which means dwelling in God, and God in them. This is having the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the spirit which he gives to us. The fact of God's desire to have us draw near to him becomes inspirational to such a heart, making the words of the Psalmist literally true in experience: "My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land." How dry and void of green pastures and quiet waters this land of the dead and dying race becomes, once an experience of the personal love of God has come in to satisfy our hearts .as nothing else can do! The answer of Jesus to such thirsting for his living water can never fail, to be made wholly true. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." - John 4:14.

We come to the written Word and learn that we may aspire to a truly marvelous intimacy with God, a nearness and a oneness with him and with our dear Lord Jesus which would, seem to, be a privilege possible to only the sinless ones of heaven. But by the sacred page and through the voice of -the living Word we learn that both Father and Son really yearn for this nearness to us, and our aspirations become alive with inspirations. We turn to chapter 14, verses 21, 23 of John's Gospel story and there we read of this desire for nearness and intimate fellowship with us: "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. If any man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will, love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." The first word is, "I *will love* him." Then, "I will *manifest myself* to him." Next it is, "We will make *our abode* with him." This represents not only desiring to come near occasionally, but a coming in to remain with us continually. O how much this can mean when our heart responds to the heart of God, and when his abiding presence is a settled fact of experience! How much it meant to Abraham to have God look upon him as his intimate friend! What a depth of meaning lies in the, words of Jesus to us in a relationship higher and more wonderful than that enjoyed by Abraham: "I have called *you friends*." His joy in this relationship is, revealed in his further word: "All things I, have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (John 15:15) -- not servants, but friends, close bosom friends, with whom 'to share the special secrets of the Father's will.

The prayer of the Apostle Paul is another expression of, the wonderfulness of this desired nearness, particularly in its meaning to us. How we should covet knowing in its fulness that which Paul contemplated in his prayer of Ephesians 3:17-19: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God." We need to think of this great prayer as representing the desire of Christ to have us draw near to him, and thereby make it possible for him to come ever nearer to us inn all the outgoing of his love and grace.

And what will this realized nearness mean to us eventually? Surely the results of a long continued and faithful fellowship with, God should be something real and manifest. This divine companionship ought to break all improper clinging to the treasures and other things of earth, and impress upon' us the clear evidence of having walked with Jesus on higher ground. A sustained nearness such as our Lord desires us to have with him should certainly tend to make us more and more heavenly minded. The tone of our life ought to testify to a good, practical understanding of the written Word received into a good and honest heart, and testify also to an intimate fellowship with the Living Word through which the stamp of his character is imparted. The Scripture make it clear that a high degree of communion with the Lord Jesus and with the Father who himself loves us, will bring about a higher standard of life before men. Nearness to God is therefore meant to carry forward his predetermined plan for us, that of perfecting in us the image of his own dear Son. May we not hope that this result has been attained in a measure proportionate to our opportunity to experience it.

"Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." (Psa. 97:11.) To know "the joy of the Lord, is therefore another result, in store for those who seek the full measure of this communion of heart to heart with him. The gladness of heart assured the righteous is just that promised by Jesus in telling us how he longs to share his own measure of happiness with us, as when he said,, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." - John 15:15.

As to what the Lord's source of joy was, we are informed .that it consisted in the things he had just unfolded to his immediate disciples. If we runback over chapter 14 and on intochapter 15, of John we can understand what Jesus meant in saying, "These things have I spoken unto you, that !y my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." The very things he had spoken made up his fulness of gladness; and how can it be otherwise with us? We need to read these chapters over again and again with that sentence always in mind: "These things have I spoken unto you." What a sharing

of knowledge, of oneness with him there is in our present and future association -- the privilege of prayer, of communion, of the Father's love, of the spirit's indwelling and power, of a fruitful life under the care and blessing of a wonder working Husbandman, even the Father himself. What light and gladness is ours as recipients of such favors! What an answer has been given to our thirsting for this divine companionship! Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy has begotten us anew to an ever living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance imperishable, undefiled and unfading, which has been reserved in heaven for you, whom God in his power is guarding through faith for a salvation that even now stands ready for unveiling at the end of the Age. Rejoice triumphantly in the prospect of this, even if now, for a short time, you are compelled to sorrow amid various trials. . . Him you love, though your eyes have never looked on him. In him, though at present you cannot see him, you nevertheless trust, and triumph with a joy which is unspeakable and is crowned with glory, while you are securing as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls." - 1 Peter 1:3-9, Weymouth.

This coveted nearness is indeed intended to give a glory to the trials purposely and necessarily associated-with our Christian warfare-which come by reason of our sufferings for Christ's sake. We must remember our great Example in this aspect of oneness and nearness with him in the will of God. Jesus "learned obedience by the things which he suffered." He was made "a merciful High Priest" for us through the experiences which were his as he kept in the pathway the Father's purposes 'had marked out for him. His present high exaltation far above all creation came as a result of a complete and happy harmony with every feature of God's will, all of which was perfectly expressed in language long before prepared for him by divine inspiration: "Lo, I come --in the volume of the Book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is, within my heart." - Psa. 40:7.

The result of our search for and finding God ought to produce this same glad testimony in our hearts. We too are privileged to learn, inestimable lessons throughh a similar obedience to all that is written in the same Book relating to our priceless privileges in grace. We too are to be made partakers of those essential priestly qualities of sympathy and mercy, which can be made a part of our, character only by rejoicing in such experiences as those through which. Jesus passed. The exaltation promised to those reckoned as worthy of a share in his present and future glory is dependent on counting the favor of God better even than life, and by possessing a spirit of happy accord with all His will. It is only through such a fervent spirit of rejoicing in being brought near to God in relationship and purpose, that the whole Christian warfare and undertaking becomes a "glorious contest." (See Weymouth on 2 Tim. 4:7.) Nearness to the Lord Jesus in these things will make us shining witnesses to a joy which no man, no circumstance, no deferred hope can quench or take from us. Thank God for the thirst of soul we have known, and for the water of life so freely ministered to us, all along our way. May we continue to drink deeply therefrom, praying on, while we continue to wait for the happiness, of a complete consummation of our hope.

"Oh Jesus, blest Redeemer, Sent from the ;heart of God, Hold us-who wait before thee, Near to the heart of God."

- J. J. Blackburn:

## Going Home

THE WORD *home* has been included among ' the finest words in our language. Indeed, some one once said that the three very sweetest words are God, Mother, and Home. Well, that was one man's idea. There are other exceedingly precious words, such as Jesus, Salvation, Faith, Hope, Mercy, Love. But we are willing to admit the value of Home. When Madam Albani as an encore sang, "Home, Sweet Home, in London, England, it was said that there were few dry eyes in the audience. The great word *home* strikes a chord deep down in the human heart. Many of us first opened our eyes in an environment which we soon learned to call "home. That environment had associations and harmonies not to be found in the world outside, but it took later experiences with life to fully impress this truth upon the mind so that we could sing from the heart,

"A charm from the skies seems to hallow all there,  
Which, seek through the world, is ne'er met with elsewhere."

When we attain to manhood and womanhood how often do we think of home, and how well do we remember our first- home-going' after having been absent for a while. We had taken up the battle of life to make our own way in the world. And now comes the summer vacation, and we are going *home*:

The telegraph posts fly past as the train speeds by, but not too fast for us. And now we are at the station. Mother has been feeble, so she is not at the station. But father is there. He is stooped and not as spry as he once was, but he has a good hearty grip in his hand. There is no question about the fact that he is pleased. We walk up the street of the old, town. There is the white house on top of the hill. And who is that at the gate? We know without asking. It is mother, and this is one of the happy hours of her life. Yes, we are home, and all the trials and cares of the past year melt into oblivion while, for a few, short, blissful weeks we bask in the radiance of love.

How the soldier dreams of home the night before the battle, and how the sailor thinks of home when the billows roar and the winds, have lashed to fury the raging main! And the question he often asks himself is, "Shall I ever see that home of mine again?"

### OUR HEAVENLY HOME

How the Christian thinks of home on the great sea of human life, when the foam-crested waves mount up toward heaven and a thousand perils seem about to spring upon him! And why should he not think of his heavenly home? Many have thought of it and have thereby felt an inspiration that has assisted them in making good. Jesus thought of it, and we are told that He "for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame." Just how much He remembered. of that former joy we are not told, but that He kept His eye on the goal before Him there can be no question. And, furthermore, He held out the prospect of future bliss to His disciples, saying, "In My Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go, to prepare a place for you, and ... I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also." How many weary pilgrims on life's rugged road have been cheered and encouraged by the music that has entered into their hearts from this mighty promise made, by the Son of God.

We are not home yet. Here we have no continuing, but we seek one to come. And "we know that if the house of this earthly tabernacle, be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." We should be getting ready for this heavenly home. We



have been, placed here to gain the necessary character development. The chief purpose of what we call the truth is to enable us to become acquainted with the Mighty One of the universe, and to establish connections between Him and ourselves. Every point of truth gained, therefore, should lift us to a higher level, making us more God-like.

And just what is the character of God? According to the Bible it is love, and divine love has been said to be broader than the measure of man's mind, and the heart of God to be wonderfully kind. Well, we have been trying to gauge and measure His love. A great many persons in so-called Christendom have set forth written or unwritten creeds, most of them having pretty high fences around them, and in these creedal enclosures they have placed (as they suppose) the love and the wisdom of God.

But some of us feel that the love of God cannot be thus circumscribed. God may be giving His favor to some who cannot see all points of doctrine exactly as we see them, or who express their belief in different terms; They cannot say "Shibboleth," and so they do the best they can and say, "Sibboleth." The question then is, should we condemn them for doing this and judge them as being virtually out of the truth? - Judges 12:6.

And another question is, should doctrines be to us stumbling stones or stepping stones? There is nothing that can make a person so narrow-minded and intolerant as religion if received in a sectarian way. Just think of the millions of persons who have been slain in the name of Christ. The knowledge of this fact should make us all very humble before the Lord, lest we be found in the company of persecutors of the saints. Of course we would not want to be found in such company, but Satan is very artful, and if he can get us to judge others, doubtless he feels very much pleased with his success.

### **OUR HOME QUALITIES**

The fact is that we should be developing home qualities if we expect to reach our heavenly *home*. We should be learning to live with all those who love the Lord, in peace, in charity, and in good will. There will be no judging among us in heaven. Then why should there be judging among us here on earth? Why judge any man when we cannot read his heart? God judges according to motives. How many little points in the Bible has God left undetermined and therefore debatable simply for the purpose of 'testing our love. Do we deserve a lot of credit for loving those who agree with us in everything? Surely not for such "yes" people 'are but the shadows of ourselves. Is it not a fact that some go about looking for their own mental reflection in all whom they meet? Such persons might just as well look in a mirror. It is often persons who do not see things just as we do who are the most helpful to us, for they are more broadening to our minds.

Now then, do we want to be narrow or broad? The world has two general classes -- conservatives and liberals. One finds them everywhere, even among Bible Students. But did not Jesus say that the way is narrow? Yes, but in what sense? In the sense that it bars out the world, the flesh, and the devil, but not in, the sense that it, bars out other Christians who are living up to the best they know and are seeking any enlightenment that God may have for them.

How many of us will reach our heavenly home? All the Christ-like ones will be there. How little Jesus had to say along the technical lines of doctrine, but he had much to say about faith in, Himself, and about love, for He interpreted the entire Decalogue in terms of love.

## THE VALUE OF DOCTRINE

But doctrine is valuable-just in so far as it makes us Christ-like. It has no value in, itself as an abstract entity. Does it warm up our hearts with a strong and ardent appreciation of the Master? Does it cause us to manifest greater kindness toward the brethren? If so, it is accomplishing its divine purpose. If on the other hand it is making us narrow, conservative, select, and selfish, then it has failed of its purpose, for we have not been using it in the right way. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His." And why? Because he lacks the *home spirit*, the spirit of love for other members of God's chosen family.

God has set the members in the Body as it hath pleased Him, not as it hath pleased us. Oh yes, it is a fact that some of them do not appeal to us. If we had the selection of them perhaps they would not be in the Body at all. Being out of harmony' with our own mental tendencies, these brethren jar against us. But God did not want a lot of people just alike, or those who would see things exactly alike. But does not the Word say that God's people will see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion? Yes, and they will do just that when this prophecy is fulfilled. And even that does not mean that they will see all things exactly alike, but they will see all the, main things alike. And the wise virgins will make the types of the Old Testament conform to the teachings of the New, and not try to twist the New Testament to make it fit the Old Testament types.

How Jesus must have enjoyed His entrance to the heavenly home after His earthly experiences! How the holy angels must have rejoiced to know of His victory! Ah yes, the Lion of the tribe of Judah had proved the mighty conqueror. What a difference between Him and the prodigal son! But the poor prodigal was glad to return home too, and what a welcome he received.

There will be some wonderful surprises in connection with our going home. Probably some will be there whom we considered heterodox and not fit to preach the Gospel while on earth. So we did not vote for them as elders or teachers, although they possessed ability to teach and preach, and their lives were unimpeachable from the standpoint of rectitude. But on some purely technical point of the Scriptures they did not coincide with our views, so we ruled them out. But the question arises that, if we acted in the aforesaid manner, shall we be there ourselves? It would seem not. This business of being a Christian is a serious matter. We do not dare to repudiate our responsibility to the other members of the Body.

There, are times in our experience, perchance, when we fancy ourselves on the verge of the broad ocean of eternity. Ere long the tide will come in and pick up our frail barque and carry us far away. But the stars will be there to guide us, and one glorious orb will outshine them all, and that will be the bright and morning Star. And oft we find ourselves thinking of the ones whom we expect to meet in our heavenly home -- the great Father and His Son Jesus, and a glittering throng of tried and faithful ones. Oh, loyalty, faith, and love will have achieved their crowning victory in that blessed morning when the portals of heaven open to receive us and we "answer to His call."

When we go Home,  
Shall the broad sea lie all at rest,  
Or shall the breakers roar  
With riot of the deep,  
Scorning the voice of sleep;  
And thus 'mid billowy sound  
Shall we go Home?  
\It matters not.

That going Home will be the same.  
The virgins will be there.  
God's loved, the true, the tried,  
Bound for the other side,  
In robes of light divine,  
Shall meet us in the air.

When we go Home,  
I think the ocean's mighty roar  
Shall melt away in peace  
To lullaby of foam;  
And heaven's gold shall glow  
In the vast vault, and so,  
Born in eternity,  
We shall go Home.

- *Walter Sargeant.*

## **Faith for Today**

*"Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" - Luke 18:8.*

THE PURPOSE of the parable which opens this chapter is to teach the lesson "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." To this end Jesus used the story of a judge who after long refusals finally heeded a widow's pleas. The heavenly judge is like the unjust judge in that he delays justice, but not like him in being "unjust," or in his motive for the delaying of justice.

This parable was much needed in our Lord's day, for the rabbis had taught, Dummelow says, "that God must not be fatigued by too frequent prayer. Three times a day was enough. 'If a man comes to address you every hour, you say that he holds you cheap: the same is true of God, whom no man ought to fatigue by praying every hour.'" This false teaching was doubtless offset by this parable for many of Jesus' hearers; but it was meant especially for our day, for Jesus so indicates in his application of it in the text quoted above. This remark was introduced by a "nevertheless," indicating that not all in our day would profit by Christ's teaching on this point.

Faithfulness in prayer, which is both a privilege and a duty, is taught by comparison and contrast in this parable.

"This widow was a stranger, nothing related to the judge; but God's praying people are his own elect, whom he knows, and loves, and delights in, and has always concerned himself for. She was but one, but the praying people of God are many, all of whom come to him on the same errand, and agree to ask what they need. (Matt. 18:19) . . . She came to a judge that bid her keep her distance; we come to a Father that bids us come boldly to him, and teaches us to cry, Abba, Father. She came to an unjust judge; we come to a righteous Father (John 17:25), one that regards his own glory and the comforts of his poor creatures, especially those in distress, as widows and fatherless. She came to this judge purely upon her own account; but God is himself, engaged in the cause which we are soliciting; and we can say, Arise, O Lord, plead thine own cause; and what wilt thou do to thy great name? She had no friend to speak for her, to add force to her

petition, and to use interest for her more than her own; but we have an Advocate with the Father, his own Son, who ever lives to make intercession for us, and has a powerful prevailing interest in heaven. She had no promise of speeding, no, nor any encouragement given her to ask; but we have the golden sceptre held out to us, are bid to ask, and it is promised that it shall be given us. She could have access to the judge only at some certain times; but we may cry to God day and night, at all hours, and therefore may the rather hope to prevail by importunity. Her importunity was provoking to the judge, and she might fear lest it should set him more against her; but our importunity is pleasing to God; the prayer of the upright is his delight, and therefore, we may hope, shall avail much, if it be an effectual fervent prayer." - Matthew Henry.

The parable supposes that all God's people are praying people. Doubt on that point is not suggested, but the parable warns that some would grow weary of leaving their affairs in God's hands (verse 1), and the application of verse 8 points the finger of warning at us who live in the day of the Lord's return, and inquires, "Are you faithfully praying, 'Lead thou me on'"; or have some of you returned to the old days when you "loved to choose and see the path"? At least that is the purport of some translations. That lesson of the parable needs to be taken sincerely to heart.

Another of Jesus' parables, that of the sparrows and the falling hair, was given that all might be assured that our heavenly Father is not like the "unjust judge who feared this widow 'might "stun" him with the blows of her continual attack. Instead, the heavenly judge has his ear open to the cries of "his own elect," coming up to him "day and night." It is by his invitation, amplified and exemplified by our Lord and his messengers, that they are thus persistent. (See Isa. 62:6, 7; 1 Chron. 16:11; Eph. 6:18; etc.) The clause, "though he bear long with them," found *in* the seventh verse, others render so as to give the thought of patience as regards the world and the Church. Douay: "Will he have patience in their regard?" Riverside: "Will not God do justice for his elect, who are calling to him day and night, even though he is long-suffering with their adversaries?" Twentieth Century: "Will not God see that his own chosen people, who cry to him night and day, have justice done them while he bears with their impatience?" Clark sees in it the thought of compassion. Those who accept the invitation to come freely to the throne of grace find none of these thoughts out of harmony with their experience. The renderings of the Revised Versions, in the text and in the margin, are also verified in their experience: "He is long-suffering over them," and "He is slow to punish on their behalf," as he was slow *to* punish typical Egypt though Israel cried to him day and night. Since all these thoughts are valuable to the new creature, it would not be unwarranted to think that the Lord has left the scholars in doubt that we might have in one short clause all these truths.

A contrast is found in the next sentence where we are assured "he will avenge them speedily." Here are two events, stated in the order of their occurrence -- two thousand years of being "slow to punish on their behalf"; but the judge "will avenge them speedily" when the Kingdom has arrived, and he takes his power. The arrival of this judge upon the scene is heralded by "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, reminding one of the avenging of "all the righteous blood shed from Abel to Zachariah" upon the generation *in* Jerusalem in the year A. D. 70 -- a time of trouble that will destroy all institutions in opposition to his Kingdom, a trouble so severe that except for its being cut short there would be no flesh saved. In fact there is no intimation of any individual beingsaved out of it except those who seek meekness and righteousness -- those in harmony with the-class the widow of the parable represents.

No one who knows the compassionate heart of our God can suppose that the tribulations of either A. D. 70 or recent years on "his chosen, people," natural Israel, were mere vindictiveness. Rather, such recognize this as God's bearing long with them and their adversaries, and by faith's vision they see' a new covenant to be established with them, made necessary by past failures, but

assuring that this time "he will speedily do them justice." However, since the context indicates that Jesus *was* addressing this discourse to his disciples, and had previously been warning them *to* expect opposition. (17:1, 2), at least the principal application of it must be anticipated in the experiences of the disciples, "when the Son of man comes." But the question Jesus asks is not a logical one to connect with the parable, nor does it seem appropriate to address to those who will at that time be so faithful as to draw down persecution on their heads -- if the King James rendering is the best one: "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" As regards the world in general and lukewarm Christians in particular, this is indeed a very proper, question, and the negative answer *implied* is clearly taught in other Scriptures, as for instance, "Because iniquity shall abound, the love, of many shall wax cold." (Matt. 24:12.) For those who are faithful to the Lord and the Word, there is, however, a much more valuable and more helpful translation of Luke 18:8, in the Diaglott rendering: "When the Son of Man comes, will he find *this* belief on the earth?" Rotherham by a footnote gives the same rendering: "I tell you -- he will execute their vindication, quickly! Nevertheless though the Son of Man do come will he, after all, find *this* faith on the earth?" Will the Christians of that time manifest their faith in the Lord by being willing to leave to him the time and method of vindicating their name; *will* they be Willing to be spoken against "as evil doers," knowing that in his due time the maligners "shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead; believing, too, his assurance that these same individuals *will* many of them some day praise God on their behalf. (1 Peter 2:12; 4:5.) (The use of "this" in the Diaglott translation is justified by many passages in the King James Version, such as Matthew 14:15; 15:12; etc.) The Variorum Bible cites J. B. McLennan and F. Godet as favoring this translation.

Barnes comments: "Though this is true that God will avenge his elect, yet will he find his elect *faithful*? The danger is not that *God will* be, unfaithful -- he will surely be true to *his* promises; but the danger is that his elect-his afflicted people-will be discouraged; will not persevere in prayer; will not continue to have confidence in him; and *will*, under heavy trials, sink into despondency. The sole meaning of this phrase, therefore, is, that *there is more danger that his people would grow weary, than that God would be found unfaithful and fail to avenge his elect.* For this cause Christ spoke the parable, and by the *design* of the parable this passage is to be interpreted. . . . There *is* a close connection in what Christ says, and it should be understood as referring to what he said before. The truth that he had been teaching was that God would deliver his people from their calamities and save them, though he suffered them to be long tried. He asks them here whether, when he came, he should find *this faith*, or a belief of *this truth*, among his followers? Would they be found persevering in prayer, and *believing* that God would yet avenge them or would they cease to pray *always*, and *faint*?"

The comment of Ellicott is similar: "The English, which, suggests the thought that God bears with, i.e., tolerates his elect, is misleading. What is meant is, that he shows himself *slow to anger over them*, i.e., where they are concerned. They implore that 'longsuffering' for themselves., They are tempted to murmur when it is extended to others. (2 Pet. 3:9); . . . The question implies, it is obvious, an answer in the negative. When St. Luke wrote his Gospel, men were witnessing a primary, though partial, fulfilment of the prophecy. Iniquity *was* abounding, and the love of many was waxing *cold*. And yet in one sense he was near, even at the doors (James 5:8, 9), when men thought that the wheels of his chariot drove slowly. So has it been, and so will it be, in the great 'days of the Lord' in the Church's history, which are preludes of the final Advent; so shall it be in that Advent itself. The Greek noun for, 'faith' has the article, possibly as implying the special kind of faith of which the Parable of the Widow had been an illustration."

"Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord." (Heb. 10:30.) "The word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just

recompense of reward." (Heb. 2:2.) "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." "We ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: which is *a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God*, that ye may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer. (2 Thess. 1:4-8.) Let us then if we have the privilege of suffering for righteousness' sake, or are companions of those that are so used, rightly evaluate our experience, "*rejoicing that we are counted worthy to suffer shame for his name*. (Acts 5:41.) "For what glory is *it, if*, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye *take it patiently*, this is acceptable with God. (1 Peter 2:20.) "If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled." "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye." - 1 Peter 3:14; 4:14.

- P. E. Thomson.