

# The Berean Christadelphian

*A monthly magazine devoted wholly to the exposition and defense of the Faith once for all delivered to the Saints, with the object of helping to make ready a People prepared for the coming of the Lord. Opposed to the unscriptural teaching of the papal and protestant churches of the world.*

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*"They received the Word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many believed" – Acts 17:11*

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**CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH**

## “Prayer And Thanksgiving”

BY BRO. F. R. SHUTTLEWORTH

The injunction to pray without ceasing, presents the idea of a continual uplifting of the heart to God; and by consequence also it teaches a modest and grave behaviour at all times, as best becoming those who have been chosen to be a royal priesthood and a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Since scriptural prayer cannot be defined as lecturing God, nor yet as lecturing to man, it behoves all to take some heed how they pray, and we shall be greatly helped in this particular if we are careful to remember the words of Eccl. 5:2, viz., *“Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few.”*

Those whose hearts are not right towards men, are not right either towards God; acceptable prayer is based upon a conscience void of offence towards both; if we regard iniquity in our hearts, the Lord will not hear us.

In offering prayer, it is well to consider that we cannot really add to the knowledge or glory of God; and therefore He is not to be worshipped as if He needed anything. We can only say with David, *“Of Thine own have we given Thee,”* or with Christ, who taught us to say, *“We are unprofitable servants.”*

*“Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us,”* is the spirit which should pervade all our prayers; as also it is the practical principle by which we measure back to ourselves the blessings we entreat...

Prayer is the closest approach to God we can make during our mortal pilgrimage. Prayer pierces the deep folding clouds that hide from our open ken the face of Him who sits upon the throne; prayer finds work for Christ and the angels; prayer purifies and tranquilizes the heart; prayer proves God; and prayerful thanksgiving and generous obedience may peradventure open the windows of heaven in overflowing blessing.

Those who love prayer live near to God; they dwell, as it were, above the clouds; their living hope enters into that within the veil: they have comfort, balm, and communion, to which others are total strangers. (*Christadelphian, 1875*)

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## Studies and Thoughts

BY BROTHER JOHN THOMAS

### JACOB'S PROPHETIC BLESSING

*"And Jacob called unto his sons and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days" (Gen. 49:1).*

Jacob being a hundred and forty-seven years old, and about to die, called his sons together to tell them "what should befall them in *the last days*." From what has been already advanced on "the end of the world," the reader will understand to what period the prophecy of Jacob principally refers. But, lest any should have forgotten, I will repeat that it relates to events which were to happen in the last days of the Hebrew commonwealth, under the constitution from Mount Sinai.

It sketches the political fortunes of the twelve tribes which, with the blessing on Joseph's sons, it now constituted; touches upon the peculiar features of the several portions of Canaan which should be allotted to them: and reveals certain principal events in connection with the tribes of *Levi, Judah and Joseph*.

It will not be necessary for me to do more than to point out these special incidents as bearing upon the Kingdom of God. After Reuben, Simeon and Levi are conjoined in the prophecy. They had slain Hamor and Shechem, and all the males of their city. This circumstance is taken as a characteristic of their tribes in the last days. Says Jacob—

*"Instruments of cruelty are in their habitations" (Gen. 49:5).*

Foreseeing the part they would play in relation to the Seed, he exclaimed—

*"O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly (See Psa. 22:16; Matt. 26:14) mine honour be not thou united" (v. 6).*

But why not, Jacob?

*"For in their anger they slew a man (See Matt. 26:57, 59) and in their self-will they digged down a wall, (that is, overthrew a city" (Gen. 34:25-29).*

*"Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce: and their wrath, for it was cruel" (v. 7).*

*The verification of these things will easily be recognized in the history of the tribe of Levi at the era of the crucifixion.*

It was the priests who sought and at last accomplished the death of Jesus, to whom Jacob refers; and to mark his sense of their conduct, he said—

*"I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel."*

This was fulfilled in giving Levi no cantonal inheritance in the land, and in including Simeon's portion within the limits of the canton of Judah (Josh. 19:1-9). From this arrangement Levi,

Simeon, and Judah became the tribes principally concerned in the transactions of the last days.

Having spoken of the death of Christ by Levi and Simeon, he then proceeded to speak of things connected with Judah alone. Of this tribe he affirmed:

1. That Judah should be the praise of all the tribes;
2. That it should subdue its enemies;
3. That it should rule over all Israel;
4. That its sovereignty should be monarchical;
5. That Shiloh should arise out of it as a lawgiver;
6. That the gathering of the people should be to him;
7. That he should ride an ass accompanied by its foal;
8. That his garments should be dyed with the blood of his enemies; and,
9. That the fountains and rocks of the country should exuberate with grapes and pasture.

Such are the points into which the members of Jacob's beautiful prophecy concerning the things of the Kingdom, in connection with Judah as the royal tribe, are resolvable when converted into literal, or unfigurative speech.

But it is very clear from the past history of the tribe that the prophecy is only partially accomplished. Judah is now "stooping down, and couching as an old lion"; and in view of his present prostration, Jacob inquired—

*"Who shall rouse him up?"*

Yes: who shall do it? Who shall start him to his feet again, that he may rend and tread down, and devour the enemies of Jerusalem? Who but the Shiloh, whose goodly horse in the battle Judah is appointed to be? (Zech. 10:3-5; 12:6; 14:14).

Two appearances of the Shiloh are indicated by Jacob; first after the departure of the sceptre from Judah; and secondly, at the attainment of the tribe to the dignity of giving laws to the gathered people. The sceptre had departed from Judah before the appearing of Jesus; but neither Jesus, nor the tribe, have promulgated a code of laws to Israel or the Gentiles. Moses was a lawgiver, not of Judah, but of Levi; but when Shiloh comes as the lawgiver of Judah, then—

*"The law shall go forth from Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem"* (Isa. 2:3).

\* \* \*

The blessing on Judah contains in it the hope of Israel. It shows what views Jacob had of the promises made to him and his fathers. His faith was of things substantial and definable. He looked for a kingdom and an empire, whose royal domain should be the land of Canaan, and especially that part of it allotted to

Judah (Eze. 48:8-22), and whose imperial ruler should be the Giver of Peace, descended from his loins in the line of Judah.

The Spirit of God in Jacob marked him out to wield the sceptre and to give laws to the world, possessing the gate of his enemies, and blessing all the nations of the earth. It is generally supposed that Jacob saw the sceptre depart from Judah. This is implied by the English version, "Not depart until Shiloh come," which is as much as to say, when Christ appears it shall depart: which is not in accordance with the facts of the case.

Having blessed Judah in the terms recorded in Scripture (Gen. 49:8-12), he passed over Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, and Naphtali, with a brief notice, and then dwelt with emphasis upon Joseph. He described in general terms the fertility of the cantons of Ephraim and Manasseh, and invoked blessings of every kind upon his posterity.

Recalling Joseph's history in the past as indicative of his descendants' in the future, he predicted that they would be sorely grieved by their enemies, and separated from the other tribes. Nevertheless, their bow, though unstrung, should abide in strength, and they should be made strong again—

*"by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob, who should help them,"*

—and bless them above what their progenitors enjoyed before they were carried away into captivity. He saw that they would be a royal tribe, and that at some period of their nationality, *"the everlasting hills" unto their utmost bound*, should bow to his sceptre who is destined to rule them (Hab. 3:3-16).

But in the blessing of Joseph, Jacob gave a very remarkable intimation concerning the Shiloh. He styles him *"the shepherd and stone of Israel"* (See Isa. 28:16). In his blessing on Judah, he foretold his descent from him; but in the blessing of Joseph, he declares he is from the God of Jacob, and (being thus spoken of in connection with Joseph) after the parable of his history.

In other words, *that the Seed should be both son of Judah and Son of God*; and that his relation to the tribe of Israel should be after the representation of Joseph's to his brethren—

*"The archers should sorely grieve him, and shoot at him, and hate him; but his bow should abide in strength, and his arms be made stronger by the God of his fathers, who should help him; and cause all blessings to rest upon his crown, who should be* LONG SEPARATED FROM HIS BRETHREN."

#### SUMMARY OF THE FAITH AT JOSEPH'S DEATH.

After the death of Joseph, which occurred two hundred and seventy-six years after the confirmation of the covenant concerning Christ, Levi and his line—Kohath, Amram, and Moses—may

be regarded as the more especial conservators of the faith with which God is pleased. Many of Jacob's family in the period which elapsed between the death of Joseph and their glorious exodus under Moses, had given themselves up to the service of Egypt's gods (Josh. 24:14).

This, however, was not the case with all. Some still kept the promises of God before them; and we find it testified of Moses when only forty years old, and before he fled from Egypt, that—

*"He supposed that his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they understand not"* (Acts 7:25).

This was forty years before their deliverance, and one hundred and fourteen years after Joseph's death. Seventy-four years after this event Moses was born to Amram the grandson of Levi. The supposition he entertained concerning his brethren's spiritual intelligence is an indication of his own; for he evidently judged them by his own understanding of the divine promise.

Although "he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians", this did not divert him from the faith. He had been indoctrinated into this in his tender years by his parents. For it is testified that—

*"By faith they hid him three months, not being afraid of the king's commandment"* (Heb. 11:23).

—thus becoming heirs of the righteousness which is by faith of the promises. This testimony to their faith shows that, however delinquent others might be, "The Faith"—the One Faith of the Gospel—dwelt in them. They instilled this faith into Moses, on the fleshy table of whose heart it was so indelibly inscribed, that not all the blandishments of the court of Egypt could efface it. The result of the parental instruction he had received was that—

*"By faith when he came to years he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect to the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible"* (Heb. 11:24–27).

From this testimony, then, we learn that *the faith in Amram's family was concerning Christ, and the recompense of the reward*; that this was so little sympathized with, that those who embraced it were subjected to reproach, and called upon to endure on account of it; and that the things connected with Christ were esteemed by those who understood them, as of greater value than the most enlightened, wealthy, and powerful of kingdoms, possessed in all its glory.

Now, as *the faith of Abraham's family is the "faith without*

*which it is impossible to please God” in any age, it will be of advantage to us to have as distinct a view of it as possible. I shall present, then, a summary of the things which were “all the salvation and all the desire” of Abraham’s family, though for a long time “God made it not to grow”.*

I shall begin the enumeration with the most elementary principle, and ascend to the more complex in the order of their development in the promises of God. They believed—

1. That a son of Eve would take away the sin and evil of the world;

2. That until the sin-power should be subdued, there would be perpetual strife between his adherents and the partisans of sin;

3. That in this war the Son of the woman and his allies would suffer much adversity, and be temporarily overcome; but afterwards, conquer all their foes;

4. That Eve’s son would descend from Abraham in the line of Isaac, Jacob and Judah;

5. That Abraham’s descendants in the line of Jacob would become “a great and mighty nation”; and that when this came to pass, Abraham’s name would be great in all the earth;

6. That all nations should be blessed, in a social, ecclesiastical, and civil sense, in Abraham and his Seed, whom I shall here-after term Christ;

7. That this personage, the hope of Abraham’s family, should *possess the gate of his enemies—that is, gain the victory over them;*

8. That Christ should possess the land of Canaan from the Euphrates to the Nile; that he should possess it “forever”, and therefore be immortal;

9. That Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob should possess Canaan with Christ for ever;

10. That Abraham was the constitutional father of nations, and, with his sons—namely, with Christ and his brethren—the “heir of the world”, which was memorialized by the change of his name from Abram to Abraham;

11. *That kings would descend from Abraham in the line of Judah, etc.;* and that, therefore, the twelve tribes would constitute a kingdom in the land of Canaan, of which Judah would be the royal tribe;

12. That through Judah, as the lion of Israel, their enemies should be subdued;

13. That “the Shepherd and Stone of Israel” would be a Son of Judah and Son of God; and that he would be the Lawgiver and King of all nations to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills;

14. That Christ would be slain by the tribe of Levi after the parable of Isaac;

15. That as Christ and Abraham are to inherit the land of Canaan for ever, they would rise from the dead to possess it; and that the same thing must occur in the case of all others who should inherit with them;

16. That after this resurrection and exaltation to power and dominion, ten tribes of Christ's brethren after the flesh would go down into Egypt a second time; and meeting them there, he would make himself known to them; receive their humble and sincere submission; and, we may add, like another Moses and Joshua in one person, lead them out of Egypt and plant them in the land of Canaan;

17. That to share in this consummation would be the reward of a righteousness counted to those who believed the things promised;

18. That every one of whom this righteousness was reckoned must be a circumcised person; or otherwise be cut off from his people; and that circumcision was the token of the covenant of promise, and the seal of the righteousness by faith.

In the exposition of the things of the Kingdom, as unfolded in "the promises made of God to the fathers," the following points have been fairly established—

1. That the *territory* of the kingdom of Shiloh is not beyond the skies, but all the land of Canaan from the Euphrates to the Nile; and from the Gulf of Persia and Red Sea to the Mediterranean;

2. That the twelve tribes of Israel are the natural born *subjects* of the kingdom;

3. That Christ in the line of Judah is its *King*;

4. That those of like faith and disposition with Abraham, and who walk in the steps of his faith, are the joint inheritors with its king; in other words, its *aristocracy*; who will share in the glory, honour, power, and blessedness of the kingdom for ever: and,

5. That all nations will be subject to this kingdom, and constitute its *empire*.

These five points, however, do not comprehend *all* the things concerning the Kingdom of God. Shiloh, or the Anointed One of God, was promised in the line of Judah; but the question remained open from Jacob's decease for many centuries after, as to the *particular family* of the tribes of Judah he was to descend from.

Besides this, there is nothing said respecting the constitution, laws, and ecclesiastical institutions of the Kingdom. It will, therefore, be necessary for us to look into these things, that we may fully comprehend the system of the world to be established by the God of heaven, when all other dominions shall have passed away.

## Fourth Letter To The Elect Of God In A Time Of Trouble

BY BRO. R. ROBERTS

*(Continued)*

Preparing to resume the journey, we are asked whither bound. "The Temple." "Not tonight?" "We had thought of it." "Put it off till tomorrow. Come with us. We spend the night at Abraham's palace. There we shall introduce you to a number of friends." The proposal is overpoweringly good. But we are not embarrassed. We would have been so in the old mortal. In the new man to which we have attained, we are simply at home in a perfect satisfaction.

We express our pure pleasure at the prospect, and start off with our company, numbering about 200 persons—men and women—all so lovely to look at and so bright to talk to. We find they comprise Jonathan, Asaph, Nathan, Uriah, Bathsheba, and a number who were David's intimates in the days of his flesh. Others we did not know. We ascertained that they formed David's personal circle in the new order of things.

Abraham's palace to which we were bent was some distance off. It stood within seven miles of the Temple, and we were still 20 miles away. There was need for speed, as the softening light warned us of the approach of the shades of evening. So, at a signal from our leader, we resorted to the angelic mode of locomotion, and by a simple act of will, were able to propel ourselves through the air by a slight motion of the limbs at a short distance from the ground. We went at a rapid pace, but it was not at all fatiguing, and there was no sense of chill from rushing through the air. On the contrary, it was a delightful exercise.

We seemed to get along like a company on very fleet bicycles but without their violent contortions. The air was balmy; and our progress through it only seemed to give us a higher sense of its exhilarating power, and bring out more distinctly the sweetness of the odours exhaling from the paradisiac vegetation clothing the hill and dale.

In an hour's time we arrive at Abraham's palace—a magnificent pile, standing in a wooded seclusion. He evidently has a large company at home. They are waiting us expectantly. We are announced while yet a good way off, and they all come out on the balconies and corridors in front of the spacious building, and salute us as we pass within the grounds in front. Ornamental tables are arranged for a repast. There is a pleasant mingling on the green sward—much brilliant talking and silvery laughter—everyone so bright and well. Then they all sit down—about 600 people.

A venerable figure rises—not bent or aged, but noble in the air of ripe maturity—hair and flowing beard of pure white: a countenance full of gravity and kindly repose, but having no sign of weakness. He calls upon every glorified son and daughter of the Lord God Almighty to give thanks to the Possessor of Heaven and earth for the overflowing bounty of His goodness in Christ Jesus. In few meet and sonorous words, he presents the offering of thanksgiving.

Then the other kingly old man stands also and says, “It is good and a pleasant thing to give thanks to the Lord. Let us praise the Lord!” and the whole company rise with a readiness that seems like an elastic bound, and all eyes on David, who raises his hand to lead, they break forth into a psalm with such fervour of shout, such emphatic enunciation of words, and such beauty of musical utterance, that the mere exercise seems to rouse them into a fresh glow of the heavenly ardour that is normal with them all.

They then sit down, and partake of grapes and various fruits. There are cooked dishes of various kinds for those who prefer. All is partaken of with perfect gastronomic gusto. There is much pleasant talk and interchange of animated glances between persons at different parts of the table. All eat heartily, but not heavily. There are no heavinesses or indigestions afterwards. It is not possible. The food partaken of becomes the subject of a slow, spiritual combustion, which assimilates every atom of it to the energy of the spiritual body; and the process of this combustion is a source of pleasure to the eaters.

The repast finished, there is a breaking up of the company into groups, and an indiscriminate commingling, affording the opportunity of private snatches of conversation with any who may choose. In this way we approach Abraham, who stands in the centre of the group, conversing in a deliberate, cordial, but stately manner. We listen, and do not presume to take part, though having many questions we would like to put. We know there will be plenty of time afterwards. After two hours spent in this way, we unite in another song, after which we are all shown to separate apartments for the night. We were not tired. We had no inclination to go to sleep. We felt quite as bright as mortals usually do in the morning, and a little brighter, I fancy. Still, it was an acceptable change to enter a cool, lightly-constructed, pleasant chamber, with slight and elegant furnishings, to spend the night alone. There was no darkness. There was a glorious moon overhead, showing a brightness rarely visible in western countries. The chamber was lit electrically: and, in addition to this, we felt a light in ourselves that made us feel as if darkness could not be.

The night quickly passed: sometimes we paced the room in

reflection: sometimes reclined on the top of an elegant couch (no need for getting under the clothes): sometimes got up and read, and sometimes sang. When morning arrived, the sun poured her golden flood in at the windows, and we were ready for a new day without any sense of fatigue such as we should have been sure to experience after such a night in mortal days.

Looking out at the windows, the eye took in a noble stretch of country, lying away behind the beautiful grounds of the palace, just in front. The country descended towards the Jordan in the distance, beyond which rose a rampart of purple hills running north and south. To the right and left, in the near neighbourhood of the palace, were distinctly marked spurs of the ridge on which the palace itself stood, covered with wood. It was a picture of seclusion and peace in the morning brightness and the balmy air, yet there was no loneliness. Pleasant sounds and the occasional sight of a visitor stepping out to enjoy the scene, reminded us that we were in the habitation of intelligence and love—in one of the abiding places of the Father's house now set up on earth.

Descending to a great hall on the ground floor, we found a large company mustered, joyous, and bright. I observed there was none of the quiet fatigue that mortals experience after an evening's social activities such as we had had. All were fresh and lively. Exchanging hearty greeting with those next to us, we sat down and waited the progress of events, our uppermost desire being an early departure to see the Temple.

Shortly a psalm was proposed, in which all took part in the effective manner of the previous evening. Then the God of Abraham was addressed by Abraham, the father of us all, in simple, earnest words, that took us all with him to the throne of the Eternal. Shortly after we had sat down, we were summoned to another room for the morning meal. Out we thronged in pleasant crowds, and were conducted to a large banqueting hall, with skylit dome roof and walls largely constructed of glass, on which vines were trained and adorned with various ornamental plants.

*(To Be Continued, God willing)*

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## Shall A Child Be Born?

BY BRO. G. V. GROWCOTT

*"And he said, Where is the lamb? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide Himself a lamb" (Gen. 22:7, 8).*

At the command of God, Abraham severed all his connections with his home and his native land, and went forth in simple faith, *"not knowing whither he went."*

Abraham's outstanding characteristic was faith. He is presented to us as the pre-eminent example in this respect—*"The Father of the Faithful."* Faith that hesitated at nothing and rose triumphant above every obstacle and natural sentiment and desire.

It is one thing to be so vividly convinced of God's closeness and reality as to be able to defy universal opinion and—dropping everything—to follow an unseen Voice through strange, wild lands for 1,000 miles with no idea of the destination or perils of the way.

It is an even far greater thing to wait more than twenty-five years in that alien land for even the first beginnings of the fulfillment of the promise that had drawn him forth. What were Abraham's thoughts as year after year rolled by, each one making the realization of the promise appear even less possible? He waited in faith.

Then, finally, when he was ninety-nine, God appeared to him again and said the promise of a seed was about to be fulfilled, (Gen. 17:16). Genesis 17:17-18—

*"Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before Thee!"*

Does this mean that Abraham's faith wavered? Paul says of this very occasion—

*"And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was also able to perform"* (Rom. 4:18-21).

Why then, after God has just specifically promised a son to Sarah, did Abraham laugh, and then say,

*"Shall a son be born to him that is an hundred years old? ... O that Ishmael might live before Thee!"*

The Scriptures show us the *conflict* of Abraham's faith—the tremendous strain that was continually placed upon it—and the way in which it rose above every trial. Not without stumblings, but with constant renewal. *God* can distinguish between failure, and the working out of an inner struggle—although often *man* cannot. Abraham's faith did not operate effortlessly or automatically. He did not wait with serene and placid unconcern. He had to extend every effort to steel his faith against the natural tendencies of doubt and discouragement, and impatience and weariness of waiting.

Faith had already carried him far, but still it was an effort of

the Spirit against the flesh. How much finer and more inspiring Abraham's faith appears when we see its inner struggle! How much closer we feel to him!

The example of Abraham would be valueless to us if his faith were something that took over mechanically like an automatic pilot and guided him without effort. It was something that he himself had to put to use by diligent application and prayerful effort. And he did, and won out, and so became the father of all who follow in his steps.

*"Abraham laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old?"*

That was the immediate, natural reaction, always present with him, which he fought and subdued for many long tedious years of disappointment and delay. *"Hoping against hope,"* Paul tells us. Doggedly shutting his eyes to the things that seemed to cry out that his faith was foolishness, and keeping the vision of the promise before him.

*"He considered not his own body now dead, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb."*

*"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief."*

His faith battled on, girding itself resolutely against the ceaseless assaults of doubt and delay.

And finally the promised son was born. How infinitely precious the seed would be, after such a long and trying period of waiting! Abraham and Sarah were now old. All the hope of the promise for which they had waited for a quarter of a century was centered in the boy Isaac as he grew to manhood.

But still God had not finished the trial and perfecting of Abraham's faith. The greatest test was yet to come, when it seemed that all testing must now surely be over—

*"And God said to Abraham, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee unto the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering."*

But that was much later. First we must consider the events that intervened. Besides the long years of waiting, Abraham had been subject to many trials, often in jeopardy of his life. His life's course was one of insecurity and instability—a continual wandering and waiting among alien perils. He left a comfortable, settled civilization in Chaldea and spent his life as a pilgrim—

*" Dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob."*

One hundred years in a tent—in summer's heat and winter's cold—just as a symbol of obedience and faith. *"The father of the faithful."* It was not what he was used to for the first seventy years of his life. Excavations in Ur reveal that he had left behind

him houses as substantial and comfortable as ours, and a high degree of civilization.

Leaving his country and kindred at God's first call, and finally reaching the promised land, he had immediately encountered famine, and faced the prospect of starvation (Gen. 12:10). In search of food, he left the land and went to Egypt. Should he have gone to Egypt or not? It is hard to say. Perhaps it was a well-meaning error of judgment, a misguided human effort to help along the Divine Plan, like the later attempt to provide a seed through Hagar. Perhaps, having been instructed by God to go to Canaan he should have stayed there until further directed, relying on God to provide. Later, in identical circumstances of famine (Gen. 26:2), Isaac is specifically warned not to go to Egypt, but to stay in God's land and trust to His care.

Looking back, we can see the spiritual significance in these instances, and it appears that Abraham's lessons and experiences are intended as a guide and warning to us. At any rate, he soon found that Egypt held greater perils than famine, and only the intervention of God averted a catastrophe (Gen. 12:15-20).

Being released and sent forth again by the king of Egypt, he returned to Canaan (Gen. 13). There the heavy burden of his useless possessions imposed another trial upon him. He was separated from Lot, his only kinsman in the land, because their wealth prevented them from living together in peace; what a tragedy! And with a heavy heart he sees Lot go off to settle amid the allurements of corruption. Lot abandons the faithful tabernacle, pilgrim living, and goes back to the comforts of a settled existence and city ways, little suspecting what lies in store.

Abraham is next confronted (Gen. 14) with the capture of Lot by Chedorlaomer. With tremendous faith and courage he goes forth with a little band against great odds, and God enables him to rescue Lot and all who had been taken away and the strange and wonderful incident of Melchizedek occurs.

Then (Gen. 16) came the unhappy case of Hagar—*human device and reasoning trying in its anxious weakness to augment and hasten the eternal workings of God*. Was it wrong? It was limited judgment, and a deeper insight could have shown Abraham that it was out of harmony with the principles of God's purpose. Here again, Abraham, with sincere zeal and good intentions, *went beyond his instructions*, and the results added to his trials.

It was not Abraham's idea, but Sarah's. Abraham hearkened to her pleading, as Adam had to Eve, but soon Sarah herself saw that in her shortsighted anxiety, she had played into the hands of her maidservant, who was quick to seize the advantage and who now despised her. And Sarah in her bitterness

reproached Abraham for having done what she herself had initiated and urged.

And there is a measure of justice in Sarah's reproach, for Abraham's responsibility was greater, and he should have guided her, rather than allow himself to be misguided by her. Henceforth there is constant friction. Hagar is finally removed much later, but first for nearly twenty years Abraham and Sarah must suffer this added burden and disharmony.

Abraham's next trial is the misfortune that falls upon Lot in the destruction of Sodom (Gen. 18 and 19). We are told that Lot was righteous, and that his soul was vexed at the corrupt practices that surrounded him in Sodom (2 Pet. 2:8).

*But he stayed there.* Even when the angels urged him, with warning of imminent destruction, it is said "he lingered," until the angels seized him by the hand and brought him out forcibly. Why did he linger, though the whole community vexed him daily with its godlessness?

*Because he had given his daughters unto the sons of the heathen.* He was bound to Sodom by the sense of a dreadful responsibility. The angels had said—

*"Hast thou here any besides—son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters—bring them out of this place."*

Lot did his best to warn them, but it was too late. He could make no impression. They thought he was mad. The damage had been done. We are told when he *first went there* the place was notorious for wickedness against God, but Lot saw that the land was fertile and prosperous, and he was carried away, to his own loss and sorrow.

Outside the city, a little further light is thrown on Lot's circumstances. His wife's character and leanings are revealed, and we understand better what happened to his family. We are not told where Lot's wife came from. It seems almost certain that she was a Canaanite, as she is not mentioned in the specific list that left Ur of the Chaldees, nor those that later left Haran. Nor is she ever mentioned previous to Lot's going to Sodom. He could have been at Sodom nearly twenty-five years. It would seem most likely then, both from this and from her conduct, that she was a native of Sodom. Jesus said, *"Remember Lot's wife"*; and surely there is much we can profitably remember about her.

The angel said, *"Escape to the mountain."* Lot replied, *"Not so, my lord, let me flee to this little city that is near."* Again we wonder, "Why?" Why presume to know better than God? Why not obey without question and leave it all to God? Why did he ask, and why was he permitted later to find his own mistake and belatedly follow the original instruction?

This city was slated for destruction with the rest, but Lot's request interfered with the full carrying out of the divine purpose. The reason Lot gives is fear of the mountains. And yet he was right in the midst of such a signal demonstration of God's power and care for him! Soon after, he comes to fear the inhabitants of Zoar more than the mountains, and goes on to the latter.

And so ends the story of Lot—in distress and humiliation and poverty—everything lost. *(To Be Continued, God willing)*

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## Pray Without Ceasing

BY BRO. E. F. HIGHAM, SR

*(Continued)*

*"Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth."*

Do we really WANT God's will to be done on earth? Then we will be developing God's will in our own lives.

We know that such a condition will never be universal by this approach, but God is PREPARING A PEOPLE to bring this to pass in the future. It first must come individually. Such individuals will be qualified examples to bring the knowledge of these principles to a humbled world population.

How important that those who preach the Gospel of peace have manifested a firm conviction of the very things they are to declare! Do we fervently want God's will in our lives? Have we arrived at the mind of Christ, when he declared—*"Not my will, but Thine, be done"* (Lk. 22:42).

Have we subjected our own will to this important fact? God's will shall be done on this earth, and very shortly. But if we have not learnt from God's Word this way of thinking we shall not be received to take part in it. Man's will cannot stand against God's. Thus we read (Psa. 143:10)—

*"Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God. Thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness."*

*"Give us, day by day, our daily bread."*

If we have comprehended God in our lives, this will be the natural recognition of God's care. We will realize that—if God has seen fit to call us to a knowledge of His purpose and requirements—we have been selected as a peculiar people with whom He is working, and we will not doubt this daily provision. *If otherwise, why should we pray for it?*

The very expression is a thankful recognition that we *believe* the facts as they are. It is a calling to mind (not just a few hurried

words) of this loving Divine care. We must not grow callous of this provision or take it for granted.

All the operations of nature are subservient to this daily provision; seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, night and day. Without these cycles of natural phenomena, this daily supply for our needs would not be forthcoming—"All things are for the sake of God's elect."

There will be no "complaining in our streets" if we realize the overall Divine supervision. The constant daily recognition will keep alive in our minds this Fatherly care for His children.

*"Everyone that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."* (Lk. 11:10).

There may appear times when this provision is not forthcoming as we would like. This is also in the Divine purpose. The natural means of God's providing may seem to be removed. Our lessons from Israel's wanderings in the wilderness will teach this. Said Israel at the Red Sea (Ex. 14:11)—

*"Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?"*

And again after the marvelous deliverance at the Red Sea as they took their journey to Sinai (Ex. 16:3)—

*"Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord (suffered the same plagues as Egypt) in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full!*

*"For ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger."*

Here are statements limiting the power of God—restricting its working in the lives of His children. It was a failure to understand that God has a greater purpose than the natural daily animal existence—

*"The Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no.*

*"He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know, that He might make thee know . . ."*

Here God teaches Israel, and us—

*". . . that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.*

*"Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years.*

*"As a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee" (Deut. 8:2-5).*

*"Give us this day our daily bread,"* then, becomes a request for God to continue working in our lives, to abandon us not; a

declaration of the supreme care of God in all our ways, not only of the natural food which perished, but of the hidden manna in His Word.

We must confess that He has graciously provided in His Own way, perhaps not as we would select, but in a way to develop confidence in Him. Any other view limits the power of God, and is not pleasing to Him.

*"Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone  
that is indebted to us."*

The word "sins" in this instance comes from the root idea of "a failure to hit a mark, or attain unto a standard, or obtain the prize." Incorporating this thought into our petitions again requires a recognition that we all fall short of attaining the mark of perfection illustrated by Christ and unto which we are exhorted to strive. We concede our inability to reach the perfection desired because of our weaknesses, for—

*"There is no man that doeth good and sinneth not.*

*"If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?"*

This is an important element in our salvation. Every sacrifice under the Mosaic economy carried this recognition. The slain animal typified that which was due the offerer; a confession of failure to do that which was required. Such an expression is acceptable to God as a statement of our position, and of our need to have our sins put away.

The linking of this thought with our attitude toward others is most important. And we are taught to pray that we may have our failures forgiven *in degree as we forgive others*. The parable of the debtors teaches the relationship between forgiveness and forgiving, climaxed with the warning—

*"So likewise shall my heavenly Father also do to you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses"* (Matt. 18:35).

*Our relationship to God is predicated on our relationship to each other.* The parable is preceded by Peter's question—

*"How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?"*

The parable is an answer to this question. The period of time for forgiveness is seventy times seven. Seventy is the number of years allotted to man (Psa. 90:10)—*"The days of our years are threescore and ten."*

We must forgive all our lives. There is no time when forgivenesses come to an end; there can be no time when they cease. Seven is the perfect number. Our forgivenesses must be all our lives and they must be perfect, complete, sincere and entire. Forgiveness can know no barriers, can know no bounds. They

cannot be hedged about or fenced in. It is everything, all the way, to the limit.

If we are earnestly desirous of God forgiving us our sins and imperfections we must be *just as earnest in forgiving each other* and seeking oneness and harmony with our brethren and sisters. The one is predicated on the other. Christ has made this abundantly clear.

The standard of the world is useless. God's standard is perfection. Let us press toward it, to agonize toward it, day by day.

*"Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil."*

The daily reading of God's Word convinces us of Divine supervision in the lives of all God's servants, that He is very near unto every one of them—

*"My help cometh from the Lord. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved.*

*"He that keepeth thee will not slumber. The Lord is Thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.*

*"The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in" (Psa. 121).*

These assurances do not however insulate any of God's people from trial and even scourging, as the list of faithful in Heb. 11 illustrates. To which Paul added—

*"My son despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked, for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Heb. 12:5-6).*

These are necessary preparations for the position intended for the gems in the New Jerusalem. Without this chiseling and squaring, the walls would be dull and lusterless. All that has to do with the Divine manifestation must be bright and glorious, and it is not a man-made glory, which fades as the flowers in spring-time blown.

That for which we are exhorted to pray, "Lead us not into temptation," is related to these Divine trials. When we do not respond to the hammering and chiseling, when we are rebellious and pull away the shoulder from the Divine hand resting upon it, we are led deeper into trial, step by step, and again remember that it is a loving and merciful hand that is leading.

*It is not for our destruction that further trial is required. It is for our salvation and our being exercised to realize the will of God.*

Remember God sends His rain on the just and on the unjust, that men may glorify God and ultimately turn to Him. But the same rain can be increased in intensity and become a hurricane or an over-flowing flood. He desires to send His "rain upon the mown grass (a humbled people), as showers that water the earth."

Many illustrations show the working of the Divine hand. Pharaoh was given ten opportunities to heed the Creator's request, "Let My people go!" Step by step he was led deeper and deeper into trial. Yet he did not respond, but hardened his heart, to his own destruction.

Judas Iscariot, selected by Christ as a close companion, given equal opportunity with the other eleven disciples, did not respond to the evidence of the power of God. Opportunities of mutual action together were used by this man as means for personal advantage in present, perishing, gain. Like Pharaoh, the depth to which he was led finally was inescapable. The door was shut. Pharaoh and Egypt lost the nation's firstborn. Judas lost his crown and his life.

Paul left the warning for the believers when writing to the Thessalonians—

*"Be not soon shaken (as a ship loosened from her moorings in a storm) or be troubled"* (2 Thess. 2:2).

Then he illustrates that certain departures from the Faith were to develop before the coming of Christ, but that these conditions were necessary in the Divine purpose.

*This condition was possible because the servants of God ceased to have a love for the Truth (they had "left their first love") that they might be saved. Then Paul shows how God leads into temptation—*

*"For this cause (because they received not the love of the Truth) God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."*

"Strong delusion" meaning "a wandering, a forsaking of the right path"—whereby those who are led astray roam hither and thither. The word is always used in the New Testament of "mental straying, wrong opinion, and error in morals." The Revised Version renders "strong delusion" as "a working of error."

Paul says God brings this condition about. It is a leading into temptation or trial, to prove if we have a basic love for the Truth. We are therefore counseled by Christ to pray earnestly that we do not get to this condition, into a position where the leading into such trials will be necessary.

The urgency of our weak frail mortal natures impresses our need for fervent prayer from the heart, that God may direct our lives away from such conditions. Paul continues—

*"God hath called you by our Gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus.*

*"Therefore, brethren, stand fast (steko—persevere) and hold the traditions which ye have been taught.*

*"Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, which hath loved us and given us everlasting consolation and*

*good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you (fix, make fast) in every good word and work” (2 Thess. 2:14-17).*

*God also is the One who will do this if we want Him to. We ourselves are the only force that can hinder His power. We must want Him to make us fast in the Truth. Therefore we pray. “Lead us not into temptation.”*

*“Deliver us from evil.”*

Evil basically is the condition in the world, brought about by sin. It is brought by God as a punishment of mankind generally because they do not desire to perform the will of God. It is a merciful eradication of a sinning population, a returning of them back to the dust of the earth, not permitting them to continue forever in their wicked way. Amos declared that evil conditions are brought by God—

*“Shall there be evil (bad) in a city, and the Lord hath not done it” (Amos 3:6).*

And Isaiah prophesied (26:9)—

*“When God’s judgments are in the earth, the nations shall learn righteousness.”*

These conditions are arranged again in love to humble mankind and make them understand the source of life and salvation. Under these broad evil world conditions the servants of God exist. They are “in the world” but must not be part “of it.”

Paul indicates that God has arranged the present order and subjected it in suffering and trial and evil that faith and trust in deliverance from sin through God’s love may be developed—

*“For the earnest expectation of the creature (creation) waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.*

*“For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him Who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

*“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Rom. 8:19-22).*

Those conditions which the world experiences, the servants of God are subjected to also. Sickness, disease, the elements, famine, and death. Our prayers should be directed toward a deliverance from all these evils. The basic word for deliverance is *rhuomai*, “to rescue,” as distinct from “to preserve.”

This illustrates that we are all in this condition, surrounded by sin and its evil (bad) effects. A realization of this will impress us with our need for being rescued from this universal condition.

A close observation and abhorrence of this evil age will convince us of our helpless condition in the earth without God. And we shall, by an analysis of the situation, feel like Lot, of

the depraved state of Sodom, for ours is another such age—

*“Vexed with the filthy conversation (conduct) of the wicked ... dwelling among them, seeing and hearing, tortured from day to day by their unlawful deeds”* (2 Pet. 2:7-8).

If we are content with the world in which we must live, we will not feel as did Lot. Yet Christ assuredly warned that world conditions at his coming would be as in the days of Lot. If we believe Christ is near, we will see the parallel, and frequently pray—

*“Deliver us from evil”*—rescue us from evil.

\* \* \*

Christ continues in Luke 11 to illustrate the operation of prayer. By parable he pictures a man in need of bread, approaching his neighbor at midnight, at a very inopportune time. By continual asking and perseverance the neighbor is brought to respond and provide what was necessary. The Greek for “importunity” implies “shamelessness”—without shame for the inconvenience and persistence and presumption of asking at midnight.

Under these conditions the neighbor provides as much as is necessary. Thus Christ exhorts—

*“Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*

*“Everyone that asketh receiveth and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened”* (Lk. 11:9-10).

In Luke 18 we read the parable of the Unjust Judge, how by continual asking on the part of the widow, he grants her request.

And the lesson—*“Shall not God avenge His Own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them?”*

*“I tell you that He will avenge them speedily.”*

Then the question (v. 8)—

*“Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find Faith (this kind of faith—this assurance manifested by continual perseverance in prayer) on earth?”*

Christ said (Lk. 11:11-13) that natural parents provide properly for their children when they ask—“if ye being evil ...”—the thought of “evil” here is distinct from “wicked”—it implies natural worthlessness in the eternal sense (“There is none good but One, that is, God”)—

*“If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?”*

This is the climax of all our asking—embodiment of nature like unto Christ and the angels—the Spirit-nature! Such is the end of all our prayers, and God has said He will give us this if

we persist in asking Him. It is illustrated by the final verses of Psalm 72—

*“Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, Who only doeth wondrous things.*

*“And blessed be His glorious Name for ever.*

*“And let the whole world be filled with His glory. Amen and amen.”*

This was the ultimate object of David’s prayers. Thus he concludes—*“The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended”* (consummated). This should be the end unto which all our prayers are tending. From God’s Word we learn—from the trials of the present, we are urgently impressed—with our need to pray.

*“Therefore watch and pray.”*

*“Pray without ceasing!”*

*“In EVERYTHING give thanks unto God.”*

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## Current Events Fulfilling Prophecy

*To be continued next month, God willing*

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### What Of The Night?

BY BRO. E. F. HIGHAM, SR

*“Go set a watchman;*

*Let him declare what he seeth” (Isa. 21:6).*

So declared the Spirit through Isaiah. Who are the watchmen? After the Master had illustrated many signs which would indicate his return to the earth he left a warning—

*“Watch ye therefore and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Lk. 21:36).*

We, as followers of the Master, have been called to the ramparts as watchmen. We stand, as it were, on the watchtower, and survey the progress of events around our citadel, the tower and bulwark of the Gospel. The cry goes up from the lips of faithful watchers to one another—

*“Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?” (Isa. 21:11).*

The combined events which are impressed on the vision due to current happenings, result in the reply—*“The morning cometh”*—the morning without clouds, the coming of the Son of God.

Bro. John Thomas, an able and clear-visioned watchman, in latter days of the Gentile times, cried forth for those who have ears to hear. He drew attention to the words of Christ which we

now consider, and to the words of prophets and apostles alike, which indicated that the Master's return to the earth was sure and imminent.

He pointed out that events set in motion by the French Revolution brought about the conditions whereby it is possible for the watchmen to see plainly the hand of God in the affairs of men and nations today. He spoke of this latter day revelation of the Truth as the real import of the resurrection of the witnesses in Rev. 11:11-12.

The world shaking events set in motion by the French Revolution, have tended toward the present condition of the world in exact accord with the words of Christ—

*“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken”* (Lk. 21:25-26).

As those years have passed the increasing tempo of world tremors and vibrations has brought about alarm for the earth's inhabitants, but have on the other hand, increased faith in God in the hearts of the true watchmen. But such a vision brings with it a great increase of responsibility for each.

The Master's prophecy to John on Patmos and to all the saints in Rev. 16:12, shows the setting of the stage for world fears as we find them today. Two thousand years ago the unerring Spirit of God pin-pointed the changing scene, as the great empire of Turkey gradually shrank within its banks to a mere trickle or second-rate nation—

*“The sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings out of a sun's rising might be prepared.”*

Events of a worldwide nature are being controlled for the purpose of God with His people, the saints—*“All things are for the sake of God's elect.”*

Contemporary with this shrinking of the power of the Desolator of God's land, and the paving of the way for the opening up of the land of Palestine for Jewish colonization, we find other events of a more ominous nature. Rev. 16:13-14—

*“I saw three unclean spirits like frogs—they are the spirits of demons—which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”*

With the change in the fortunes of Turkey has come the influence of France during the last century as her foreign policy has teetered back and forth, vacillating between pact and league

with every power on the Continent, spreading hatred, suspicion and fear in the hearts of statesmen and laymen alike. At her steps must be laid the responsibility for most of the wars of the 19th Century. Her unsettling agitation created international alliances and counter-alliances which constantly contributed toward armament races, which have become as a shackle around the necks of nations large and small today. Every disarmament conference has been scuttled through the doubts and fears raised by this "frog" influence. Her policies have aligned the nations in accord with the Divine purpose—

"And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (Rev. 16:16).

Certainly the conditions spoken of by Christ are existent in our days. Nations are being drawn relentlessly into the vortex of the maelstrom—

*"Nation shall rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom"* (Matt. 24:7).

Even nations nominally associated together for survival have difficulty in common agreement for any length of time. These things were spoken to the disciples in answer to the question—

*"Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the age?"* (Matt. 24:3).

This is the scenery and the behind-the-scenes maneuvering of nations in the drama of the ages, all arranged and controlled by the Creator, with the focal point upon His witnesses the Jews—

*"The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men"* (Dan. 4:17).

*"When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance"* (Deut. 32:8-9).

These world happenings may appear to the average mind as entirely natural, and but the ebbing and flowing of the nations as humanity adjusts itself to a changing age. Though these adjustments have gone on for 6,000 years, they have all been regulated in an orderly pattern to a Divine end. It is not coincidental that we find many forces taking their places in the picture in this generation. If they had happened separately there would have been reason for doubt. But coming conjointly in one age as we see them, the ground and confirmation of faith is laid unmovably in the hearts of true watchers.

*"There is no peace saith the Lord, to the wicked"* (Isa. 43:22).

These wars, which have been pressing in increasing numbers

upon the nations, are breaking down the fabric of family life, are searing the conscience of millions and sending the moral structure of men and women below the level of the beasts. The irony of this fact is that the publication of the Word of God, the Bible, maintains its paramount place over all other works.

In Matthews' record of the outstanding prophecy of the end by Christ he states)—

*"This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations, then shall the end come"*(Matt. 24:14).

It will be a witness against them, as was the preaching of faithful Noah. The conditions are identical, as Christ said they would be, again forging another link in the chain of evidence which inescapably ties our age in with the coming of the Son of man. Though no man knows the exact day and hour of Christ's coming, sufficient testimony of God's Word leaves no question of it being in the present generation—

*"As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be, for as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark; and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be"* (Matt. 24:37-39).

Innocent occupations, the world would say; such things have been going on for 6,000 years. How does God view these events?

*"God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually"* (Gen. 6:5).

The increase in crime, juvenile delinquency, and evil on every hand, the astounding multiplication of the divorce rate, and breakdown of morals of every sort, both amongst old and young alike, the corruption in government, labor, civil and social orders, exceeds the imagination of most people. The disregard of parental advice and the lack of it, the lack of corrective measures, contribute an element to the scene. On a human basis these things make one shudder to behold what a prolongation of the generation will bring. If things were otherwise this would not be the end for which we look. Paul, who said his words were the commandments of Christ, warned of our days—

*"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God"* (2 Tim. 3:1-4).

Christ said that Noah's age "Knew not until the flood took them all away." Paul states that with the revealed purpose of God, that the brethren and sisters should not be found so—

*"But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you, for yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night"* (1 Thess. 5:1).

And that was what Christ said in the middle of the Armageddon prophecy of Rev. 16:15—"Behold I come as a thief." The Master made another historical comparison which ties in with present day world conditions—

*"Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed"* (Luk 17:28-30).

Innocent occupations, some may say. But what saith the Word?—"God delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked, for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds" (2 Pet. 2:7-8).

Our senses of seeing and hearing are jarred and grieved every day by a duplication of the sins of Sodom around us. The urgency of the coming of the last judgments of God are pointed up by this sign on every hand—

*"Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues"* (Rev. 18:4).

It is obvious that we dare not mingle with the world's entertainments and pastimes. Sodom is fulfilling her antitype as the Master said she would. While all these conditions have been preparing in accord with the Master's prophecies, we find he enters an entirely different strain into his remarks. With heaven-and-earth-rending events, political storms tossing the sea of nations, causing them to cast up mire and dirt, we detect a theme of life and hope, which is made the very basis of encouragement for God's elect—

*"Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand."*

*"So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh (at hand)."*

This was not a new thought, but simply reset in an arrangement which would focalize our vision upon the time of its fulfillment. Solomon, one thousand years before, had been moved by the Spirit to record that beautiful Song wherein he sang of the saints, the Bride of Christ, to indicate that the winter was over

and gone, the winter of their trials and tribulations. He stated—  
“*Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. The fig tree putteth forth her green figs—arise my love, my fair one, and come away*” (S. of S. 2:10-13).

Here the resurrection of the saints is associated with the budding of the fig tree. Jeremiah later uses the fig tree to represent the nation of Israel being carried captive to Babylon—

“*As the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil; surely thus saith the Lord, so will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes and the residue of Jerusalem—to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them*” (Jer. 24:8-9).

Christ himself, coming to his own nation in a parable, referred to them as a fig tree in need of cultivation, because of lack of fruit (Lk. 13:6-7)—

“*A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.*”

“*Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, behold these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?*”

For two thousand years the prophecy of God through Jeremiah has held true. Yet the prophet had also declared—

“*Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee ... “He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock”* (Jer. 30:11; 31:10).

The scattering is over. The time of the budding of the fig tree is before us. We are anxiously waiting for every sign of activity in respect to this glorious land. The eyes of God are upon this land from the beginning of the year to the end of the year (Deut. 11:12).

Dr. Thomas, taking these same prophecies in hand, could discern the shape of coming events which we now behold in actuality. Only a few hundred Jews occupied a small part of the land in almshouses. Yet he could confidently write—

“*The restoration of Israel is a most important feature in the divine economy. It is indispensable to the setting up of the Kingdom of God*”—*Elpis Israel*, p. 439.

Slowly, as men count time, but unerringly as the Creator has arranged the nations on the international chess board, the nation of His purpose has revitalized Jewish aspirations for a homeland, made urgent by the pressure of ghetto life for centuries, receiving force and momentum by the calling of the first Zionist Congress in 1897. The modus operandi was wanting because the land lay

under the power of the desolating Turk. When the Zionist movement had gained sufficient force, God again adjusted the scene by the first World War, 1914-1918. The only advantage which evolved from that conflict was the opening up of Palestine by the removal of Turkey from the sphere in 1917 by the British.

Ironically the British Empire, whose national policy had been to bolster the decaying Turkish Empire against the power of Russia, was made to be the means of liberating the land of Palestine from that same desolating power. In what marvelously natural ways does the Creator display His powers!

Dr. Thomas had previously foreseen the placing of Britain in Egypt as a necessary prelude to this accomplishment: "God will bring Britain's rulers to see the desirableness of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba, which they will be induced by the force of circumstances probably to take possession of. The possession or ascendancy of Britain in Egypt, Ethiopia and Seba, will naturally lead to the colonization of Palestine by the Jews"—*Elpis Israel*, p. 445.

The force of circumstances started to work in 1882. Riots in Egypt. Britain moved in. Revolt in the Sudan. Again Britain stepped in. From these localities Britain and her allies have been able to reclaim the land of Palestine for God's people and establish the nucleus of a budding nation. Jewish claim to the land of their fathers was reestablished through the labors of Dr. Weismann, whose chemical researches were of immeasurable aid to the British during the first World War. The reward for his assistance was the implementation of the famous "Balfour Declaration" which opened Palestine as a homeland for the Jews—

"His majesty's government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish People, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object."

The Suez canal irrevocably linked British interest in the Middle East. She has from that day to this underwritten the government of Egypt, and precariously balanced the teetering economy of that "base kingdom" (to use the words of the Spirit through the prophet Ezekiel). Through the 1920's and 30's the economy of Palestine under the watchful care of Britain became consolidated, not without the keen observation of envious Arab eyes. Railways, roads, schools, cities, industries and above all, agriculture surged into being. But the Jewish population lagged. Another master stroke of the Divine brush was called for, to touch up the picture. The Jews who had been persecuted for centuries were not anxious to return in great numbers. They

were more interested in the marts of Europe. God had said, the fig tree should blossom and bring forth leaves. Jewish immigration into the land was restricted by Britain in 1939, and became another road block across the Divine purpose.

Swiftly the Creator struck. Germany was on the war-move before many months were over. The first-born of many nations were called to spill their blood from the cities of Britain to the steppes of Russia, and from the burning sands of the Sahara to the frozen tundras of the Lapland. When the smoke had cleared, 6,000,000 Jews had been slaughtered, and kindled a flame in each remaining Jewish breast urgently requiring an Exodus to Palestine by whatever means.

Britain lay twisted in pain and humbled. The force of circumstances soon required her exit from Palestine; while at the very moment she withdrew, the land gave birth to a new nation, the Nation of Israel. The doors of immigration were thrown wide open to Jewish entry. This increase in population, bringing the ingenuity of centuries, has brought about the fulfillment of the Master's words, "The fig tree is shooting forth" to such an extent that it has drawn the eyes of a fearful and wondering world.

The face of the land is being completely changed. From swamps, arid deserts, barren and rocky mountains, the whole country is putting on a mantle of verdure, as all the trees and all the hills open their thousand leaves. It is the finger of God. Let us not minimize it by our close acquaintance with it. Our brethren of years ago would have cried it from the housetops—"Watchman, what of the night?" And the echo would come back—"The morning cometh."

But Christ did not stop with the Jews. He said—"Behold the fig trees AND ALL THE TREES." All the nations are asserting themselves, both large and small. Joel had previously stated—

*"Wake up the mighty men ... Let the weak say, I am strong"* (Joel 3:9-10).

The small, backward nations of former generations have risen from obscurity and are making their voices heard in world courts, such as the United Nations. Their influence and vote is courted on every hand by larger powers to accomplish their own ends of world influence, and preeminence. Russia has risen to her Divinely appointed position of the Colossus of the North, feared on every hand and against whom the democracies have pitted their strength and ingenuity.

India and China, passive for centuries, are now flexing their muscles for the fray and are vying with one another for Asiatic superiority. The tribes of Africa are on the move, as one after

another seek their independence. As each comes to birth the forces of the North and South seek their support.

The prophecy of Jacob to Esau has been true through the centuries. *"By thy sword shalt thou live"* (Gen. 27:40).

As also the angel's words to Hagar the mother of Ishmael—*"He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him"* (Gen. 16:12).

We see the descendants of these two men now rising against their brother. Israel is encircled by the Arabs, while the great powers use Israel as a pawn, harrying her as a bird in a cage, playing cat and mouse with her to serve their own ends.

The reaction of many people in authority is that injustice has been done to Israel. Yet on the other hand it is surprising to hear responsible men declare that Israel is a troublemaker and has received what she deserved. Almost 3,450 years have passed since they stood upon the shores of the Red Sea and Egyptian might came against them, as they were encamped between Migdol and the Sea, at Pihahiroth.

They were defenseless against the might of Pharaoh. Is not the same scene being re-enacted before our very eyes? Israel is once more squeezed in between her enemies and the sea.

*"And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee My power; and that My name may be declared throughout all the earth"* (Exo. 9:16).

Can we not see the angel of the Lord standing between Israel and her foes? It is the Lord's doing and marvelous in our eyes. It is a time for watchful and prayerful patience by God's servants. Israel's deliverance brings eternal salvation for the righteous. The sky will become darker over their land, before the salvation comes. Israel must be shaken of a mighty wind, and her untimely figs cast to the ground, that the fruit of righteousness may remain and be gathered into the Kingdom of God. We know what yet lies in store—Russian aggression against God's land. Israel and her natural defenders are overthrown. The pride of natural confidence is dashed to the ground.

Then shall the Lord fight for His people as He did at the Red Sea. Once more shall the song of Moses be on their lips—*"The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation. He is my God, I will prepare Him an habitation."*

Therefore, ye watchmen, upon the heights, lift up your heads, raise your voices, for all to hear! Raise your voices unto the God of heaven—give Him no rest until He make Jerusalem a praise in all the earth! Therein lieth our salvation.

*"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee."*

## One Hundred & Thirty Five Years Ago *(Continued from page 360)*

In all countries of Europe the Jews have been evilly entreated. Very recently, Germany, the home of culture and the center of European philosophy, stooped to persecute the chosen people but, unfortunately, the end is not yet. Intelligence has reached St. Petersburg that a fresh outburst of religious intolerance has just occurred in Nijni Novgorod, Russia."

### **The second item dealt with the "Jews and Charity"**

The most important question of the time all through the world is the distribution of charity by such methods as will not encourage mendicancy and will relieve the needy. The Jews have learned the vital truth that their paupers must be taught the value of independently striving to maintain themselves. Their new generation of poor are furnished with the tools and knowledge of trade, or furnished with the first capital of commerce. No Jewish paupers are being manufactured. The strong are organizing not merely to help the weak, but to enable the weak to help themselves. The trouble with our own charities is that they relieve but for the moment, and do not leave the sufferer in any better position than he was before.

**(How true this is, for the Jews have always remained together, and as recorded in scripture, are "a separate and a peculiar people." Even in today's society, the Jews have looked after each other. As the charities, such organizations that exist today, provide only temporary relief and never help the individuals to improve themselves. Such is the way of the flesh).**

\* \* \*

**Starting in this month's issue is the first chapter of bro. Roberts' new book entitled: 'Christ: His Life and Work 1,800 Years Ago'. This book became known later as "Nazareth Revisited" and traces beautifully the many incidents in Christ's life, as recorded in the four Gospel messages.**

\* \* \*

**There is an article taken from a Rome newspaper concerning the Pope. The article and bro. Roberts' response is as follows—**

The Moniteur de Rome, in an article on "The Pope's Departure," says he "will perhaps leave Rome, but never will he abandon it." It is not a capital the Pope will go in search of, says the Moniteur, "it is a refuge for a night. He will not as on the day when, like his glorious predecessor, Pius VI, he takes the path of exile, definitely displace the center of the Church; he will simply wait outside the Vatican for the end of the revolutionary whirlwind which, for the second time within a hundred years, will have shaken the Holy See."

### **Bro. Roberts' response—**

The next revolutionary whirlwind, Mr. Editor, will blow the Pope off the face of the earth, and all his belongings. If you knew and believed the Scriptures, you would not have so much cause to speculate. The destiny of the Papacy is "sure and certain." It cannot be abolished till its heaven-appointed abolisher arrives.

**(The faithful truly await this day, when the blood-ridden Papacy will be removed forever and the blood of the saints revenged).**

**Bro. Roberts printed the below. Observing what goes on in the media and what passes for civil discourse convinces us that this day is now upon us—**

Throwing the Bible over and espousing evolution, is likely to develop a relapse to barbarism.

\* \* \*

**In answer to a correspondent bro. Roberts made the following comment—**

We admit that the devil is to be found in clerical garb: but that is only one of his shapes.

\* \* \*

**Speaking once again about Dr. Thomas' understanding of Bible prophecy, the following words were printed—**

We cannot admit that Dr. Thomas' foreshadowing of the leading events in European politics for the past forty years was the result of political shrewdness. No political shrewdness is equal to the discernment of coming events. No statesman ever does "see the end of certain events."

No: "coming events" do not "cast their shadows before them" in the political sphere. The contingencies affecting the issues are incalculable.

Atheists try to get rid of prophecy: it is futile. The prophets were not men of political insight, but men to whom a knowledge of the future was communicated by God. Dr. Thomas was not inspired like them, but he was a clear-eyed discerner of their prophecies. Where he relied on political possibilities merely, he made mistakes. Where he rested on the plain indication of prophecy, he was able to forecast the course of events with a correctness that is inexplicable except on the ground that the prophets were inspired, and that he was enabled to hit on their meaning.

\* \* \*

**The 'Signs of the Times' section for this month carried a lot of material on world events. The subjects considered were: Anglo-Russian friction in India; Egypt, Europe and England; Russia pressing close to India; as well as The Jews and the Holy Land. On these events bro. Roberts informed his readers—**

While Mr. Gladstone (of England) has been arousing the country in a series of addresses delivered to his constituents in Edinburgh, the three head policemen of Europe, the Emperors of Austria, Germany, and Russia, have been arranging for a meeting.

The meeting is public and ostentatious, and cannot but mean great results as the Emperors commanding between them about 5,000,000 soldiers, can enforce on Europe whatever decisions and agreements they arrive at. They are accompanied by their several foreign ministers—Bismark, Kalnoki, and Giers, whose diplomacy has recently become very active in an Eastern direction, more especially as respecting the tottering empire of the Turks, in whose fate all the world is interested, but no part of it so much as that invisible part that believes the

promises that God has made, which will survive all the pomps and pageantries of crowned monarchs and mustering forces.

**The section continues on concerning Egypt—**

Egyptian events, too, have been moving fast. An expedition for General Gordon's relief (and such other effects as must come out of the step) having been decided on as a necessity, a plan of operations for carrying it out was transmitted from the London war office to the military authorities in Egypt—viz., to send the expedition in boats on the Nile to Khartoum. Orders were given at once for the required number of boats, and the ship-building yards of the country have been resounding with the hammer day and night, getting them ready. A British army of 6,000 or 8,000 men, unaccompanied by any Egyptian troops, goes to Khartoum. That it will succeed seems to be a matter of course. That its success will plant England firmly in the African Cush, seems also to follow. The personal interest taken in General Gordon will make the whole country follow the course of the expedition with great attention. The Gordon element is a mere ingredient in the situation, but a powerful one, and probably destined to play a providential part in events.

**On the subject of Russia pressing closer to India, we found written—**

Among the other events of the month has been the appointment of Lord Dufferin to the Governor-Generalship of India. Lord Dufferin has taken the leading part, as Britain's representative, in all the diplomatic movements recently connected with the Turkish and Egyptian questions, and is well versed in the politics of the entire Eastern Question.

The Daily News remarks that his appointment to India at this time indicates that matters here are reaching an acute form between England and Russia, as affecting Russia's increasing proximity to India. Meanwhile, Russian advance in Central Asia goes steadily on, to the alarm even of Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet.

**(135 years ago Russian intrigue was found among the nations. How much more so today! Russia has her fingers in almost every nation on the earth, to one degree or another. All nations recognize her awesome power, but nothing can be done, for Russia has to take her place of antagonism in accordance with the divine purpose of God).**

\* \* \*

**There is another item concerning the Jews that is interesting. It mentioned the fact that a school had been established in Jerusalem a couple of years before and stated—**

The rapid progress that the school has made since its establishment a couple of years ago, shows the incalculable benefits it is destined to confer on future generations of Jews in Jerusalem.

**Bro. Roberts' comments—**

Future generations of Jews in Jerusalem will be blessed from a better source and in a higher way. It is interesting, however, to see the time of blessing thus commencing in the natural way appointed.

**Some time back, we had noticed that a leaflet had been published, called**

**The Visitor.** Due to its discontinuation, we find included in this October issue, a new section set aside entitled *The Ecclesial Visitor*. Its function was the same, to make the brethren and sisters aware of events, etc., that were transpiring in Birmingham; as well as including certain exhortational and expository items. On the change we find this information—

On suspending the publication of the weekly Visitor, in June last, a hope was expressed that some features of it might be preserved in the *Christadelphian*. We proposed carrying out this idea in the August number; but various considerations induced us to wait. The Lightstand being now fairly launched by bro. Shuttleworth, with a character peculiarly its own, and there being no likelihood of said features being supplied in any other way, we commence this month the attempt to realize the hope expressed.

\* \* \*

#### DIFFERENT Bible Lectures—

- “The Royal Preacher”
- “Christ’s Transfiguration”
- “Jerusalem, Past, Present and Future”
- “The History and Destiny of the Hebrew People”
- “The Land Covenanted”
- “Can a Politician Be a Follower of Christ?”
- “The Rise and Growth of Theological Tradition”
- “The Malady of Sin—the Physician and Cure”
- “Paul Bound at Rome with a Chain, and what He was Bound For”
- “Is the Punishment of the Unsaved Eternal Misery?”
- “The Messenger of the Covenant”
- “Lucifer, Son of the Morning”
- “Is the Observance of the First Day of the Week by Gentiles as the Sabbath, Acceptable to the Deity?”
- “The Attitude of Modern Thought in Relation to the Scriptures”

#### September Answers—“Connect Things With Persons

- |                      |                          |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Ear—Malchus       | 21. Riddle—Samson        |
| 2. Gulf—Lazarus      | 22. Dagger—Ehud          |
| 3. Gate—Rhoda        | 23. Javelin—Saul         |
| 4. Mice—Philistines  | 24. Tombs—Legion         |
| 5. Apes—Solomon      | 25. Shrubs—Ishmael       |
| 6. Plow—Elisha       | 26. Amber—Ezekiel        |
| 7. Pulse—Daniel      | 27. Ravens—Elijah        |
| 8. Lime—King of Edom | 28. Strakes—Jacob        |
| 9. Darts—Joab        | 29. Ouches—Bezaleel      |
| 10. Cross—Simon      | 30. Shrines—Demetrius    |
| 11. Sheet—Peter      | 31. Locusts—John Baptist |
| 12. Noses—Passengers | 32. Gallows—Haman        |
| 13. Organ—Jubal      | 33. Timbrel—Miriam       |
| 14. Pulpit—Ezra      | 34. Conduit—Hezekiah     |
| 15. Husks—Prodigal   | 35. Oxgoad—Shamgar       |
| 16. Weeds—Jonah      | 36. Thumbs—Adonibezek    |
| 17. Fleece—Gideon    | 37. Artillery—Jonathan   |
| 18. Coffin—Joseph    | 38. Hammer—Jael          |
| 19. Wedge—Achan      | 39. Lanterns—Judas       |
| 20. Purple—Lydia     | 40. 70 heads—Jehu        |

# One Hundred & Thirty-Five Years Ago

*The Christadelphian, October, 1884*

There are two informative items, quoted from newspapers in this month's issue of the *Christadelphian*, pertaining to the Jews. The first mentioned their persecution. Bro. Roberts quoted the items and then commented on them—

“Among the nations shalt thou find no ease” (Deut. 28:65)—  
Gentile newspapers have, probably, no idea how signally they illustrate the truthfulness of the prophetic word, when they write about the Jews—

“There is probably no people in the world more law-abiding than the sons of Judah, yet no people have had a more sad experience of the laws' ferocity of religious fanaticism.

*(Continued on page 356)*

## BIBLE PUZZLE—Bible Scholarship

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. The law was our ...                      | 21. I have more understanding than my ...    |
| 2. Opposition of ... falsely so-called      | 22. Many infallible ...                      |
| 3. The righteous... to answer               | 23. ...obedience by the things he suffered   |
| 4. Understandest thou what thou ...         | 24. ...yourselves whether ye be in the faith |
| 5. Mayest ... to fear the Lord              | 25. Obtained a good ... through faith        |
| 6. The ... were opened                      | 26. He ... all things to his disciples       |
| 7. My tongue is the pen of a ready...       | 27. ... to show thyself approved             |
| 8. The king had ... Haman                   | 28. Blessed is he that ...                   |
| 9. Knowledge of... inventions               | 29. Let him that readeth ...                 |
| 10. He could not frame to ... it right      | 30. Teacher as the ...                       |
| 11. By the ... of this ministration         | 31. Fools despise wisdom and ...             |
| 12. Have ye not ... what David did?         | 32. With ... and pen write unto thee         |
| 13. Few that even a ... may write them      | 33. They ... his words                       |
| 14. He shall write him a ... of this law    | 34. Till I come give attendance to ...       |
| 15. Lead me in thy truth and ... me         | 35. Take fast hold of ...                    |
| 16. Much ... is a weariness to the flesh    | 36. Not write with ... and ink               |
| 17. ... to do well                          | 37. From a child thou hast ... Holy          |
| 18. After... I might have somewhat to write | 38. Lord ... us to pray                      |
| 19. Daniel understood by ...                | 39. ... unto him the way of God              |
| 20. Write in it with a man's ...            | 40. I will ... in Thy precepts               |

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Examination	Learn	Readeth	Teach
Examine	Learned	Reading	Teach
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Expounded	Paper	Report	Understand
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