

The Berean Christadelphian

A monthly magazine devoted wholly to the exposition and defence 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 teachings 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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We are anxious to send the Berean FREE to any desiring it that way. Please do not hesitate to request it. If you know of any who might like it, please send us their names.

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Ecclesial News

WINNIPEG, Manitoba—3449 Assiniboine Grove, R3K 0H5—Bro. Joseph Jackson

GREETINGS of love to the Brotherhood.

Since moving from the eastern coast of Canada to mid-country, we have visited the Richard ecclesia twice, and we have enjoyed the company and fellowship of the following visitors: From Richard: bro. Gordon Jones, sisters Sarah Sadler, Annetta, Phyllis and Shirley Jones. From Austin, Texas: bro. & sis. G. Booker. From London, Ont: sisters Clara Sparham and Ruby Bere. Bre. Booker and Jones exhorted at the memorial meetings, which was greatly appreciated.

In addition to the above, two Sunday school members from Richard visited us, Sidney and Gwen Jones, whose company we all enjoyed.

As we see the nations hastening to their doom, we are vividly reminded of what "manner of persons we ought to be." Our probation is drawing to a close, and so very much depends on what we do, say and think in this our hour of opportunity.

Let us strive to hold to Truth, endeavor to walk in Truth, labor to keep the oil-olive Word pure from infiltration of impurities which constantly threaten to undermine it from sources both outside and within. Paul's words must not go unheeded—

"Beware of wolves in the clothing of sheep."

PAPAKURA, New Zealand—Bro. A. Starr, Ardmore R.D., via Auckland

LOVING GREETINGS to all in the Berean fellowship from my sister-wife and myself, in the spirit and words of the Apostle Paul—

"Grace be to you, and peace, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ."

Although it is some time since we communicated in this way, we certainly have not been unconcerned of the severe trials in recent years of our brethren throughout the world. We are fully convinced of the scriptural necessity of the Berean fellowship coming into existence, and the continued scriptural maintenance of doctrine and practice. Concerning recent occurrences among us, would not the following be applicable—

"Let them return to thee, but return not thou to them" (Jer.15:19).

"Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil: neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment" (Ex. 23:2).

We are certainly living in momentous times. One of the most striking recent events is Egypt's changed, more friendly, attitude toward Israel and the Western Powers, which will surely be a big step toward the "Peace and Safety" cry, and we all know what that portends: a very sobering, albeit joyful, long-looked-for event, even our Lord's return.

We do appreciate the help we derive from the Berean, and are indeed grateful to all the brethren who contribute to its contents.

Since last writing, we have very much appreciated several visits, some of which included their welcome company around the memorial table of our absent, but not incognizant, Lord: bro. & sis. Griffin, bro. Les Fisher, bro. & sis. Crocker, and bro. & sis. Riley, all from the Whangarei ecclesia. The only other brother, bro. J. Marsich, made the supreme effort to visit us nearly 2 years ago, but now, owing to his age, is physically unable to travel.

With love in the Truth to you all, from us both,

Your brother in the One Hope in Jesus Christ, A. J. Starr.

A HOLY CALLING

We have to remember that the world at large have not only forgotten the theory of the Truth, but that they have never realized WHAT IT IS THAT MEN ARE CALLED TO when they are called to be sons of God, and brethren of Christ, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

From this unenlightened world most brethren have but recently come. Consequently they are liable to bring the world's maxims with them. Casting about for the right one, the only safe plan is to rely for guidance on the Word only.

Brethren are only trustworthy insofar as they echo the Word's sentiments and principles. If they complain of the way of godliness being narrow, or the standard high, they complain against the Word.

If the way is narrow, and the standard high, it is God Who has made them so, and it would be madness in us to tamper with them while PROFESSING to accept them.

—**Bro. Roberts.**

The Fifth Commandment

"Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee"
—Exodus 20:12

THE Ten Commandments given to the people of Israel, when they assembled at Mount Sinai, formed the basis of Israel's national and religious life. The first four relate to God, the fifth to family, and the last five to a man's relation to other men.

It is not difficult to assess the inestimable value of these Commandments, for in Exodus 19:5, God refers to them as "My Covenant." This is further elucidated by what Moses wrote in Exodus 34:28 —

"And he (Moses) was there with the Lord 40 days and 40 nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And He (the Lord) wrote upon the tables the words of The Covenant, The Ten Commandments."

The supreme importance of The Fifth Commandment is evident from the fact that it is one of the Ten. Brother Roberts, writing in *The Law of Moses*, said —

"Surely there is no more beautiful sight under the sun than to see intellectual children, YOUNG OR OLD, doing honor to father and mother."

When the children of Israel arrived at the east side of Jordan, in the land of Moab, Moses began to rehearse all the Law that God had given him, and then explained it as he proceeded. When he came to The Fifth Commandment, he said in Deut. 5:16 —

"Honor thy father and thy mother, as the Lord thy God commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

This clearly signifies that the well-being of the people depended to a great extent upon keeping this commandment. Again, brother Roberts said —

"To whom should honor be paid if not by offspring to those who have been the means of their existence . . . ? When the fear of God prevails, the honor of father and mother will accompany."

In the Proverbs, there are 3 pertinent references relating to the Fifth Commandment which we think should be included in this message —

"My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother; for they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains (necklace) about thy neck" (Prov. 1:8-9).

"My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee" (Prov. 6:20-22).—the word "talk" means "meditate."

"Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old" (Prov. 23:22).

These are beautiful expressions of the Spirit through Solomon, and should be memorized by every child in Christadelphian Sunday Schools, and retained in their mind after they become grown-ups.

There is another side of this Commandment that shows the supreme and vital importance of obedience, for it carried severe penalties for disobedience —

"For every one that curseth (bring into contempt or despise) his father or his mother shall be surely put to death; he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood shall be upon him" (Lev. 20:9).

On one occasion when Jesus was in conflict with the scribes and Pharisees, he quoted this commandment in the following manner —

"Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honor thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death."

"But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honor not his father or his mother, he shall be free."

"Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition" (Matt. 15:3-6).

There is another form of penalty that reads —

"Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or mother"—Deut.27:16

A profoundly impressive fact about the Fifth Commandment is that the penalty for breaking it is the same as for murder. If anything could make us stop and contemplatively think about it, surely that should.

The commandment is re-enacted in apostolic teaching by Paul in chapter 6 of his letter to the Ephesians, where he says —

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor (that is, revere) thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."

We must remember that this is a commandment, and not just a suggestion on the part of Paul.

In writing these monthly messages, I have tried to keep out personal references, but on this subject there is something I would like to say about my own father and mother. When I was a child, I thought fathers and mothers were just around to keep me from having my own way. But when I became old enough to understand certain things, I learned about the suffering my mother endured to bring me into the world.

Long before I knew anything about the Truth, I developed a deep respect for my mother that remained with me as long as she lived. And when I realized that my father had to work very hard to provide for the family, I honored him in many ways. Although unaware of the Glorious Gospel, our family life was a very happy one.

The family life of the Household of Faith should also be an incomparably happy one, and it would be if every one of us followed the instructions of the apostle Peter in 1 Pet. 5:1-4—

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

"Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. "

In like manner, said Paul, in Eph. 4:32 —

"Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Is this the way we always treat all the members of the Household of Faith? Let us examine ourselves and see where we stand in relation to these commandments of Peter and Paul. —Editor

No Peace Without Purity

Search the Scriptures and see if the thoughts in these paragraphs are in harmony with the Truth. If so, then search thine own heart and see if thou art in harmony therewith.

The Truth can beget and bring forth only love and obedience in and from the heart, if permitted to do its perfect work. False views may abide in an ecclesia under concealment, but no ecclesia can harbor them when once they become known, or are open, without becoming a partaker therewith.

The Lord is the cleanser of his own Household, it is true, but it is in the matter of secret sins and doctrines and personal character, since the ecclesia must purge itself of OPEN sins whether in doctrine or practice; for if the ecclesia fails to purge itself thereof, it is living in sin before the Lord. Whoever sees his brother walking in sinful ways and hideth the matter in his heart, hath sin lying at the door of his own heart.

The character formed in this life must be in complete harmony with the order of things in the eternal world, else unalloyed love and joy and peace could not fill the heart and mind in the presence of a pure God. The Lord looks at the heart, and the heart that is right in His sight can rejoice before Him; for—

"A broken and contrite heart the Lord will not despise."

—since He—

". . . looks to him who is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at His Word" (Isa. 66:2).

There can be no contrition of heart where chastisement is not patiently borne, and evil ways forsaken. Whoever rebels at the chastisement of the Lord may well tremble when called to the judgment of His Household.

There can be no ecclesial peace where purity does not precede the peace. There can be no ecclesial purity where the bond of love does not bind every heart with sound doctrine and fellowship.—**Christadelphian, 1892.**

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Fraternal Gatherings

(if the Lord will)

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The Roll, the Ephah, & the Women

BY BROTHER JOHN THOMAS

"What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll.. And he said, This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth"—Zech. 5:2-3

ZECHARIAH CHAPTER FIVE

In Zech. 4, the prophet, after the angel had "waked him, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep" (that is, after he had been figuratively raised from among the dead), saw in a vision a Lamp with Seven Burners, Two Olive Trees, and Two Olive Branches; the last being representatives of—

"The Two Anointed Ones that stand before the Ruler (Adon) of all the earth."

This was the Spirit of the Only Potentate, organized and manifested, in the Sons of God (that is, in the Saints), subsequent to their resurrection, or "awakening as a man waking out of his sleep"; and styled by Jehovah in v. 6, "My Spirit," upon the principle that—

“That which is born of the Spirit IS Spirit.”

Now while the prophet was contemplating this symbolical representation of Jehovah's Spirit in manifestation, he heard the Angel say—

"This is the word of Jehovah unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, said Jehovah of Armies, Who art thou, O Great Mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain, even to cause to go forth the Head Stone with acclamations of: Grace, grace unto him."

In hearing this, the attention of the prophet was directed to a great crisis, which may be termed, the *Fall of Gentile Dominion*, and the full establishment of the Kingdom of God.

But it is not our purpose to enter into the details of this remarkable and interesting vision of the Lamp and Olive Trees. We only introduce it here at all as an introduction to the vision which immediately follows it. The "*Great Mountain*" is named, and its reduction to "a plain" is declared; but no particulars concerning it had been revealed in the vision.

We proceed, then, to remark in illustration of the subject that contemporary with the times of Zechariah, the great Gentile dominion that dominated Jerusalem and Judah and all the rest of "the Earth" from India to Ethiopia (being 127 provinces, under the 3 presidencies, or "ribs in the mouth and between the teeth of it"—Dan. 7:5) was that of THE BEAR under the dynasty of Darius the Persian.

Zechariah knew from Daniel that *this* was not the "Great Mountain" to be destroyed before Zerubbabel, but by the Leopard-power that would succeed it. He also knew from Jeremiah, and the history of his own times, that the Lion, standing upon its feet, with a man's heart, was not the constitution of the Mountain Power under which it is to "become a plain before Zerubbabel."

This Lion-manifestation of the great mountain had passed away before Zerubbabel had become Governor of Jerusalem. Jehovah had said concerning the Chaldean Babylon that had done evil to Zion in the days of Jeremiah—

"Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith Jehovah, which destroyest all the earth, and I will stretch out Mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a Burnt Mountain.
"And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations; but thou shalt be desolations of an Olahm, saith Jehovah" (Jer. 51:25-26).

In this decree was the sentence which has been practically illustrated for the past 2400 years. From the capture of Babylon by Cyrus, the Chaldeans and their city began to decline, until the two have ceased to have any more existence socially, politically or architecturally, than if they had never been.

The site of the old city of Nimrod on the Euphrates is literally "a burnt mountain"—a mound of ruins made by fire; and a type of dominion peculiar to the Chaldee race and dynasty, in all the countries where they formerly ruled in power and great glory.

Architecturally, a stone of the ruins has not been taken for the corner and foundations of any new edifices; nor has a Chaldean by his own prowess, nor by the voice of a people, been made the corner or foundation stone of a new political institution.

This is what has not been known for 2400 years; and the prophecy decrees the continuance of the same condition without limit, in saying to the Burnt Mountain, "*Desolations of an Olahm shalt thou be, saith Jehovah*"—an Olahm which began with the building of Babel, and ended with the fall of Belshazzar—Lucifer, Son of the Dawn—who was hurled from the heavens by Jehovah's "sanctified ones," the Medes and Persians under Cyrus, His anointed Shepherd. (Isa. 13:14; 46:28; 14:1-4.)

Many of Zechariah and Haggai's countrymen who had witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple of Solomon by the Chaldeans, had lived to see the fall of Nebuchadnezzar's dynasty, and the completion of the new temple, which was finished shortly after Zechariah had the vision of the Lamp and Olive Trees (Hag. 2:3).

They knew that the Burnt Mountain was among the things of the past; and that Zerubbabel had had nothing to do with its burning, and its downfall from the rocks. What then could the Eternal Spirit mean by the "Great Mountain" he addressed as destined to become a plain before Zerubbabel after his resurrection from among the dead?

It was not the Chaldean, nor the Bear, nor the Leopard; for they saw by Daniel that all these were removed by conquest in the ordinary way. What else could it be then but that Fourth Beast Dominion which is to be destroyed by the Saints? To this then Zechariah's attention was turned.

The Fourth Beast dominion was 'diverse' from all preceding it.

"It spoke great words against the Most High Ones, and thought to change times and laws" (Dan. 7:25).

This was a very peculiar dominion; and it was judged proper to give the prophet and his readers some idea of its origin; of the origin of its peculiarity. Hence the prophecy of the "Flying Roll" and the "Ephah."

In Zech. 5:1 the prophet tells us that he "*turned*." In doing this, he occupied an altered position, which caused him to face new objects. The Lamp and Trees were behind him; and on lifting up his eyes and looking, he beheld —

"A roll 20 cubits long, and 10 cubits broad, flying."

On this roll a curse was inscribed; it is therefore styled "*the curse*." The flying of the roll indicated its progress, which became coextensive with the whole earth. The angel's words express this. In telling the prophet what it signified, he said—

"This is the curse that goeth forth over all the earth."

—not of *all the globe*; but of "all the earth" in the sense of the phrase as it is used in Dan. 2:39 & 4:22. In these places, the dominion of Nebuchadnezzar is said to extend "to the end of the earth;" and the larger kingdom of the Greeks to "bear rule over all the earth."

The extent, however, of these two dominions was unequal; and neither of these included the countries now known as China, Russia, Germany, Italy, Spain, France, Britain and other countries.

We need not, therefore, look for something coextensive with the globe as the significance of the symbol; but coextensive with *that section of it*, over which the subject of the symbol prevails. This is "all the earth" in relation to it, though of very limited extent in regard to the globe at large.

The roll contained cursing on both sides upon certain criminals designated as thieves and perjurers. These were not common criminals; but—

"The prophets that steal My words, saith Jehovah, every one from his neighbor, and use their tongues, and say, He saith."

These prophets were not only thieves, but also swearers—they invoked the Name of the Lord falsely —

"Both the prophet and the priest were profane; yea, in My house have I found their wickedness, said Jehovah" (V. 11).

This was the moral condition of the leaders of the Jews who caused them to err, and brought the Chaldean desolation upon them, from which a remnant had just been saved.

The roll, therefore, which Zechariah saw, related not to the past, but to the *future*; when the prophets and priests in Jehovah's house should become thieves and swearers falsely by His Name. In due time the curses of the roll would be brought forth upon them to their utter destruction—

"They shall be consumed, together with the timber and stones of their house" (Zech. 5:4).

The resemblance of these ecclesiastical thieves and false invokers of Jehovah's Name, is an "Ephah going forth." It is the "*measure*" of their wickedness," which when filled up, would cause them to be brought forth from their lands as their fathers were—

"This Ephah is their resemblance over all the earth."

But their *wickedness* which *filled* the measure is personified by a Woman, who is confined within the measure by a leaden weight indicative of their being destined for the furnace of Jehovah's anger, which should blow upon them like fire, and melt them as lead (Ezek. 22:18-22).

A measure of wickedness subjected to the melting fury of Jehovah inscribed upon the sides of the roll, is the signification of the Talent of Lead, the Woman, the Ephah, and the Roll. But in order to show whose wickedness is contained within the Ephah, Ezekiel's 2 Women are attached by the Spirit to the Ephah.

They were seen by Zechariah "lifting up the Ephah, between the earth and the heavens," that is, exalting wickedness to high places. These women are Aholah, or Samaria, and Aholibah, or Jerusalem (Ezek. 23:4-5), the 2 capitals being put for the nation.

At a future period of their history, Zechariah saw them in vision "going forth" and "carrying the Ephah," or measure of their wickedness, with them into the land of the enemy that rends them with its "great iron teeth"—the land of their captivity, where they build for their wickedness "a house which should be established upon its own foundation," a house destined, with its occupants, to be consumed "to the timber and stones thereof."

The 2 women are represented with wings like the wings of a stork. Moses classed the stork with unclean birds; so that for them to have such wings, shows that they were lewd, or unclean women, or communities. The stork is also a bird of passage, migrating from one country to another at an appointed time. Hence the women-bearer of the ephah, being stork-like in their means of flight, were to migrate at an appropriate time from the land of their uncleanness.

The last feature of the symbol to be named is that "*the wind was in their wings.*" Wind is air in motion. When a bird flies the air fills its wings, and eddies into them, so as to waft it onward in the course of flight. The wings of the 2 women indicate that they were fugitive, and being stork-like, as we have said, that they were unclean and migratory.

But wings are of no use without the air to fill them; and no bird can pass through the air without setting it in motion, or producing wind. A bird could not fly in a vacuum. Hence, these unclean, and fugitively migratory communities must be propelled by wind. What is wind in relation to such?—

"Terrors (says Job) pursue my soul as the wind" (30:15).

In Jer. 4:11-13, the coming of an army swiftly and fiercely, destroying all before them, is expressed by a dry and a full wind—

"It shall be said to this people and to Jerusalem, A dry wind of the high places in the wilderness toward the daughter of My people, not to fan, nor to cleanse; even a full wind from those places shall come unto Me."

"Now also will I give sentence against them. Behold, he (the Destroyer of the Gentiles) shall come up as clouds, and his chariots as a whirlwind; his horses are swifter than eagles. Woe unto us, for we are spoiled!"

Here then, in the vision of the Roll Flying and the Ephah, was a symbolic representation to Zechariah of a captivity of Jerusalem and Samaria in a period of judgment subsequently to his time. Hence in searching out the meaning of the vision, we have to consult the history of the Jews since the times of the prophet, and to ask of it this question—*What going forth, or captivity, on account of wickedness has happened to Judah since her return from the 70 years in Babylon?*

The only answer that history gives, and therefore, the only answer that can be given, is the "going forth" compelled by that dry and full destroying wind which swept over the land as a whirlwind when the legions of the LITTLE HORN OF THE GOAT came from the eastern frontiers of the empires; and planted their Eagles before the walls of Jerusalem, under VESPASIAN and TITUS.

It was the prophecy of Dan. 8:9-12, 23-25; 9:26-27 symbolically reproduced before the mind of Zechariah; and embodied by the Lord Jesus in his denunciations of the ecclesiastical thieves and perjurers, who "*filled up the measure (or ephah) of their fathers*" in crucifying him; in rejecting and perverting the glad tidings of Jehovah's Kingdom and Name; and imprisoning, banishing, and killing the apostles whom He sent to them; so that the long developing judgment came upon Jerusalem and Samaria, with all who adhered to their wickedness, personified in Revelation as:

"That Woman Jezebel, who styles herself a prophetess, teaching and seducing the Lord's servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols" (Rev. 2:20).

Upon her came—

"All the righteous blood shed upon the land from the blood of righteous Abel even to the blood of Zechariah, son of Barachias, whom they slew between the Temple and the altar."

—all came upon this generation.

(Continued next month, if the Lord will)

"The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh"—Proverbs 11:17.

This basic lesson is repeated throughout Scripture in countless ways. In the ultimate, we can harm no one but ourselves. All the foolishness and evil that men commit eventually returns upon them, if they come within the range of God's plan. If they do not, they are simply classed with the animals and are outside the scope of scriptural consideration. Whatever we do will ultimately affect our own happiness, for good or ill. However we may gamble to the contrary, and even appear temporarily to win, this inexorable Divine law will eventually balance the account with relentless accuracy. "God is not mocked. As a man sows, so shall he reap." If only we could fully realize and accept this so plainly declared fact, what sorrow it would save us!

* * *

"The integrity of the upright shall guide them; but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them"—Proverb 11:3.

There is only one way to ultimate success—the simple, quiet, plodding way of righteousness. The cleverest and most spectacularly successful scheming of the wise of the world can carry them ONLY AS FAR AS THE GRAVE. The lowly and simple righteous man will finally plod right past them into eternal life and glory. He will achieve, to an infinite degree and for an eternal continuance, all and far more than they ever grasped at and lost.

The last enemy to be met is death. It is the result of that final meeting that will determine whether a man has been a success or failure in this life. How many of our present activities will retain their value and importance to us in that day?

Ye Have Lived in Pleasure

"Our Savior Jesus Christ.. gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works"—Tit. 2:13

BY BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS

In our readings this morning (2 Tim. 3), we have been informed that the Scriptures—which are elsewhere declared to be for *comfort and patience*—are also profitable for *reproof and instruction* in righteousness. We have recently had occasion to look at the comfort in the glory of the prospect opened up before us in the Gospel. This is the bright side.

Today we glance at the dark side—that side, namely, that exhibits the position of saints in the present evil world—taking the word "*saints*" for present purposes, as including all upon whom the name of Christ is called (without reference to whether they are faithful or otherwise).

Here we shall find reproof and instruction in righteousness most salutary—*most necessary*. While in this position we are in danger. The greatness of the danger is evidenced in the constant recurrence of the apostolic exhortation to be on our guard —

"Beware, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

"Let us therefore fear, lest any should seem to come short."

"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed, lest he fall."

"Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."

"Redeem the time because the days are evil."

"Be ye holy in all manner of conversation."

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world."

"Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear."

Such are examples of the constantly recurring precepts of the Spirit to the saints in relation to their present position. They point to our *danger*, and danger calls for circumspection. Let us look this morning at some of our dangers. The chapters read give us a clue. We read therein of some who were to be—

". . . lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God."

The persons so described were *not unbelievers*: they were professors, for it is added that they had—

". . . a **form** of godliness but denying the **power** thereof."

This is a graphic description. It sets forth *exactly who is meant*. It does not mean that the persons to whom it applies would deny there was a form of godliness, or reject the form. The word "deny" has the same force here as in the counsel to believers to:

" . . . deny ungodliness and worldly lusts."

—that is, *put them away*—have no part with them. Don't consent to them—deny them. The persons in question believed the Gospel *in theory*, and submitted themselves *in form* to its institutions, but there is a something in connection with these which they practically denied in not being influenced by it: "**THE POWER THEREOF**." What is this?

If seed is put into the earth, and does not germinate, it has no "power" in the soil. It is powerless, and at last succumbs to corruption. This is a simile employed by Jesus himself, in reference to the Word: the Word is seed: our minds are soil: if the seed does not bring forth the results intended, *we have the "form" without the "power."*

As a rule, the failure of seed to germinate is due to some defect in the seed. In other cases the seed is good, but some one or more of the conditions necessary to its fructification are wanting. There is a lack of moisture, or the ground is too hard, or it is not sufficiently covered with soil.

In the case of the seed of the Word, there is no defect in the seed: failure in fructification must be due altogether to the surrounding conditions. These conditions are most of them subject to control.

The quality of the soil cannot be altered: a man cannot by an act of will change himself at the start from being what he is, as regards natural capacity and proclivity, but he can regulate the external conditions which at last even affect the constitution of the mental soil to some extent. A piece of poor ground well cultivated will show a fair result, and even improve in quality, where good soil untended yields weeds, and deteriorates in its own constitution.

The parallel in the case of mental tillage is perfect. Certain conditions are essential to the fructification of the good seed sown in the heart, and other conditions are hurtful and will positively arrest growth at last and bring decay and death.

The pursuit of pleasure is one of the latter conditions. It is mentioned in the chapter read: "lovers of pleasure" are the antithesis to "lovers of God." It is mentioned in other places. Paul speaks of certain female professors, who living in pleasure, were "dead while they lived." The opposite condition is expressed as—

"Living soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope."

Incidentally, we have a practical illustration of the two states in one of the chapters read. In 2 Tim. 4:10 Paul says —

"Demas hath forsaken me, having loved the present world."

Two years before, in writing to Philemon, Paul describes this Demas as his "fellow laborer," and therefore a partaker of the sufferings that are incident in all ages in one form or other to those who identify themselves with the high calling of God which is in Christ Jesus. So that here is the case of a man, an actual companion of the apostles, turning aside because he "*loved the present world.*"

Now this is an influence to which we are all, at all times, exposed. There *are* pleasures in the world. There is recognition, entertainment, society, merry-making, and honor for those that the world loves, and these things make the time speed pleasantly away.

Even for those that the world does not love, there are many pleasures provided, if people like to go in the way of them. There is a gratification to the natural mind in going with the multitude in the ways of pleasure. There is always a fascination about the thing, *especially if it is "respectable" and engaged in as something about which the lovers of pleasure can say there is "no harm" in it.*

The temptation to give in to this kind of seduction is liable to be felt in the loneliness, endurance and self-denial that belong to the present walk of fellowship with Christ. The temptation is especially felt by the young, who have not yet realised the *hollow character of all the ways of man*. They need especially to be warned, and if they are wise, they will listen. There are two strong reasons why they should listen—always pre-supposing that they have earnestly made Christ their portion, and not taken up with him merely because friends have done so.

There are two things which make it impossible for those, whether old or young, who desire the approbation of Christ at his coming to indulge in the pleasures of the world, whether in the form of the ball-room, concert-hall, theatre, or any of the other devices sinners have invented to while away heavy hours.

The first is, *these things are hurtful to the new man formed within them by the Word*: they check the fructification of the seed of the Word. They hang a heavy weight on the spiritual racer: they help the sin which doth already too easily beset us: they tend to hold the mind in a carnal sympathy, and to keep at a distance the things of God. *They make us feel one with the world, which is God's enemy.*

They are therefore a hindrance. They do not help us to Christ, but they rather widen the distance between us and him. Who has not at one time or other experienced the mental blank—the spiritual desolation—caused by the peculiar mental excitement called "*pleasure*"?

Therefore on the score of spiritual expedience, spiritual men and women (and none others are the children of God) should never be found in the paths of pleasure-seeking. They should be found taking care of the seed of the Word sown in their hearts.

To follow pleasure is as if a man should water his garden with vinegar or lime water. Let him water it rather with the pure water of the Word, and fertilize it with those self-restraints and sobrieties which will make it healthful and strong and vigorous.

But there is a stronger reason why we should—

". . . stand not in the way of sinners, nor sit with the scornful."

It is one of the *plainest teachings* of Christ concerning himself and his brethren that they are "not of the world." By the world he does not mean the earth, or air, or sky; he means the people that inhabit the earth; the people who compose the present order.

Not being of the world is a sufficient reason of itself why we should not be found consorting with the world in its particular pleasures and festivals. But we are expressly *commanded* to "Love not the world." We are further informed that if in spite of this exhortation, we do love the world and have its friendship, *it will be at the price of God's friendship*, for—

"The friendship of the world is enmity with God."

There is substantial reason for the invitation to —

"Come out from among them and be ye separate" (2 Cor. 6:17).

—that God may receive us, and that we may be His sons and daughters. That reason is the one given by John —

"All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father." —that is, these sentiments are *not such as the Father approves* as the motives of action in those whom He has formed in His own image. Now these feelings mentioned by John are the conspicuous features of every worldly gathering of pleasure-seekers, and of worldly people when they do not gather. *When we attain to any growth in Christ, we see this clearly, and more clearly every year.*

At first, to youth and inexperience (and *always* to the carnal mind, whether old or young) it seems not so bad. Things seem fair and harmless; and the apostolic portraiture overdrawn, and the scruples of such as are guided by the apostles over strong.

But at last, with maturer judgment of all things and enlarged appreciation of things that are truly "good," the world looks all that it is; and if we are wise, we stand aside as God's friends have always stood aside from the enemy of God.

We get to see that the world in all its ways is *wrong at the root*. What root is that? God. The world sprang from God: and in a right state of the world, God would be its highest honor, its highest concern, its highest pleasure.

But in the actual state of the world, God is *not there at all*. He is unknown, unregarded where professedly recognised, sneered at where not actually denied in words—blasphemed everywhere in the actions of men. His Word neglected where admitted, despised where not avowedly cast out, spurned and denounced where the carnal mind openly unfurls the flag of its rebellion.

While casting God behind its back, the world scruples not to use—as if it were its own—the goodness God has distributed with open hand on every side. It lays its hand on everything as if it were creator and lord of all. It puts itself in the place of God. The Word tells us that *for the pleasure of God* creation exists (Rev. 4:11). The world ignores this and acts on the theory that all things are for the pleasure of man. Thus God is dethroned.

God purposes a great change in this respect. He intends to humble the haughtiness of man, that the Lord alone may be exalted in that day. He intends to exhibit His glory to the eyes of all flesh, when, because of His judgments, all nations shall come and worship before Him. He will say —

"Be still, and know I am God. I will be exalted in the earth."

The day is coming when one shall not say to his neighbor —

"Know the Lord—for ALL shall know Him, from the least even to the greatest" (Jer. 31:34).

Every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue confess. Meanwhile He is making preparation for that day in the selection from men by the preaching of the Gospel of a family who shall shadow forth His glory, and execute His authority in the Age to Come. They are called to the fellowship of His Son, who is the firstborn of the family, and their elder brother.

This fellowship consists in *walking as he walked* (1 John 2:6), doing the will of the Father, and glorifying His name, even to the point of enduring the contradiction of sinners against themselves.

Now, *these*—the appointed executioners of Divine vengeance on the world, the appointed reflectors of Divine wisdom in the Age to Come, the appointed instruments of enlightenment and blessing to Jehovah—shall *these* be found consorting in the pleasure-seeking of a world that knows not God, and obeys not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Can the *Sons of God* give countenance to assemblies and occasions in which God is dethroned, and pleasure placed on the seat of honor and power?

It is scarcely possible for a heart in true sympathy with God to falter in the answer to this question. David is a true instance of such a heart, and he says

"I have **hated** the congregation of evil-doers, I will **not** sit with the wicked . . . I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers."

Such will be the account that *every* faithful son and daughter of the Lord God Almighty will give of themselves. And what if such a course may bring present weariness (though a righteous man is less weary in solitude than in the crowd of those who set not God before them)? What if it shut you off from much that *looks* agreeable and entertaining and advantageous in the present?

The day that hastens is a day of great recompense for those who take up the cross and follow Christ. It is a day when the present evil world will be no more, when it will have passed like a dream, when the children of vanity shall lament in vain with weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, mourners shall be comforted, and the despised shall be exalted.

There is no human joy and no earthly pleasure comparable to the joy and gladness that will electrify the ranks of those who shall come to Zion with singing, crowned with everlasting and unspeakable joy in the day when, for them—

"Sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Many things that are not expressly forbidden are excluded from a saint's practices if he seek to reach the standard set up for him in the writings of the apostles. It is an injunction to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh or spirit, remembering that our bodies are members of Christ.

There are things on which men of sense and holiness do not require prohibition. Who does not know that narcotism is inconsistent with the pure action of the vital machinery of which God has constituted man? Who does not know that tobacco fumes have a defiling effect on those who steep their faculties in them? Who does not know that it is the universal practice of wickedness, and associated with every form of debauchery and evil-doing in our dark and evil day. Who does not instinctively shrink at the sight of children smoking? Who could behold a woman smoking without feeling that she was degraded? Who could imagine Christ with a cigarette in his mouth?

On these grounds alone, a man of judgment will say that smoking is a thing to be eschewed by every man who seeks to purify himself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit that he may be "holy both in body and in spirit," walking as becometh a saint in the midst of an evil world. —**Bro. Roberts, 1893.**

There Are Giants in the Land!

"And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said: Let us go up at once, and possess it: for we are well able to overcome it... The Lord is with us; fear them not!"

Strangely, the name Caleb means "a dog," which at first appears unusual for the name of a servant of righteousness. But there is point when we realize Caleb was the "son of Jephunneh the *Kenezite*," or Kenizzite (RV)—Num. 32:12. The Kenizzites were a local tribe in Abraham's day (Gen. 15:19). The most likely explanation appears to be that Jephunneh accepted the God of Israel and joined himself to the tribe of Judah, from which he took his wife, Caleb's mother. The acceptability of "dogs," or outsiders, in God's plan was illustrated by the discourse between Christ and the Syrophenician woman. Jesus said to her—

"It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs" (Matt. 15:26).

But she replied—

"Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table."

Here was an illustration of humility, coupled with a confident faith in the power of God —

"Great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

In Eccl. 9:4 it is recorded, "A living dog is better than a dead lion." Caleb in his associations with the tribe of Judah brought life to that tribe which was represented by a lion. To those Gentiles in all ages who have believed that God is a Rewarder of them who believe in Him and diligently seek Him, *Caleb becomes a representative man.*

As we continue the course of our daily readings in days to come, we shall see the congregation of Israel, shortly after their agreement to follow "all that the Lord has said," standing at the borders of the promised land.

They had seen His glory in Egypt and His outstretched hand on their behalf in provision for them in the wilderness. God had controlled the elements for their sakes. He had subdued the power of Egypt when they were defenseless. He had succoured a million and a half people in a weary land. He had constituted them a select nation with divine laws, giving evidence of His awful majesty.

And now they stand unprepared to proceed into the land unto which all His previous provision had been leading them!

They chose to accept the report of ten men with finite perceptions, against the word and power of God. Ten men, leaders in Israel, brought trouble upon the host. But the responsibility lay with the people. They were looking for an excuse for doubting the word of God. They seized upon the fact that there were "giants in the land"—

"The people is greater and taller than we: the cities are great and walled up to heaven: and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there, which come of the giants: we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."

There have *always* been "giants in the land." The more faithless the generation, the larger and stronger the giants appear to be. When we realize the purpose of God—when we comprehend the fact that God is all-powerful—the vision is entirely reversed from that of the faithless ten.

"Without faith it is IMPOSSIBLE to please God."

If we honor God by trusting what He has said, He will in due time reward us. Though there be many "great cities walled up to heaven" in our way, the path to their overcoming will be provided.

"He that is higher than the highest regardeth, and there be higher than -they" (Eccl. 5:8).

Those giants which we often *think* we see, prove to be distortions of our mental vision and evaporate before the rays of the Word of God.

The women on the way to anoint the body of the Master had a "great stone" to roll away. It loomed as a large obstacle, but its removal proved a simple task for angelic power; and the fears of the finite mind proved to be unnecessary worries. Yet their trust in God directed their steps, rather than a spirit of faithlessness. These women moved against the power of Rome.

This attitude is well illustrated in the two clear voices rising against, the rebel voices of Israel which would have destroyed Moses and caused Israel to return into Egyptian darkness. Two voices stood out alone above the fearful chattering of a faithless generation:

"Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up AT ONCE, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it! Their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not"

(Num. 13:20; 14:9).

They stood out against the anger of Israel, even though it meant being stoned to death. These two men were a comfort to Moses as he strove to quiet the fears of Israel, and the mob hysteria of a perverse nation. Then ten spies bringing back the evil report died by a plague from God. Joshua and Caleb were preserved.

The tide of human nature has always pulled the side of evil. It has required the combined energies of a few righteous God-fearing men to balance the trend. Such was the case throughout Israel's long and sorrowful history.

It became very evident during the years of the ministry of the Apostle Paul. We see Paul struggling against the inevitable tide of Judaism, and the development of the man of sin, the mystery of iniquity. His words are a prophecy of the declension which would afterwards set in:

"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them"

(Acts 20:29-30).

We see beside Paul a few men of the same caliber and conviction as Joshua and Caleb, holding up the hands which labored for God. Among them were Timothy and Titus. Paul's writings give evidence that they were men who faced with determination the realities of the powers against which they fought. They knew it was a losing battle in their age, but that had no bearing upon their attitude toward the warfare.

The events which followed Israel's refusal to enter the promised land indicate the patience and forbearance of the two faithful spies, and show their minds were centered upon the Abrahamic covenant with its *eternal blessings*, rather than the temporary, conditional possession predicated on observance of the Mosaic Law. Moses' Law only assured a mortal continuation of the probationary sojourn, while pointing forward to the way of life without end.

The land which lay within the grasp of Israel was not opened unto them. They were not prepared to accept the protection of the Creator. They dishonoured Him by disbelieving His power. God's pronouncement upon them was—

"After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even 40 days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even 40 years, and ye shall know My breach of promise" (Num. 14:34).

The pronouncement upon Israel of a 40-year wandering in a waste and desolate land equally affected Joshua and Caleb.

"If when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently: this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps"

(1 Pet. 2:20-21).

"*For even hereunto were ye called.*" Caleb was called from the world to suffer for wrong doing on the part of God's people. Forty years wandering became the portion of Caleb, along with the wicked nation. Forty more years before the land would be his. Caleb was even then 40 years old. He would be over 80 as the journey ended. Truly the vision was sure, but the time appointed was long. Yet we do not hear a word of complaint—only the divine record of approval:

"My servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed Me fully, him I will bring into the land whereinto he went, and his seed shall possess it" (Num. 14:24).

Here was a test of faith in God: a trial similar unto those which Abraham endured. Caleb, though only partly related to the father of the Jewish race, gave evidence that he had espoused with deep conviction the hopes which were linked with Israelitish relationship in the highest sense: that relationship proved by his having the faith of Abraham. *And it was counted unto him for righteousness for all generations forevermore.*

"Is God the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also"

(Rom. 3:29).

"God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him."

Irrespective of outward appearances of failure of the plan, God works out a purpose in His own good time. It is the part of faith to accept the appointments of God without question. He does not ask a blind faith. It is a faith based on *evidence* of His manifested power. And a failure to accept God's will in view of a knowledge of these evidences is grounds for rejection:

"All those men which have seen My glory, and My miracles, and have tempted Me, these 10 times, and have not hearkened to My voice; surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers"

(Num. 14:22-23).

And thus Caleb, with the others, turned his steps away from what appeared to be the final objective of their struggle from Egypt. Forty years, patiently following beside Moses and Joshua; enduring the murmurings of a faithless generation; witnessing the certainty of God's pronouncement upon Israel, as the ranks of Israel were cleared one by one of the objectors.

Shall we say that these were 40 years wasted as far as Caleb was concerned? No. Probation and trial are required of all the servants of God. We hear no more of Caleb until we see the people in the promised land. God had a purpose in the subjection of this man to the wilderness wandering. Certainly he was a source of courage to Moses and Joshua, as they struggled with the people.

A new generation was coming up which would enter the land. Caleb's very existence among them was proof of the sureness of God's Word. He thus became a witness, a living sacrifice to the purpose of God. His personal advantage was placed second to the will and glory of God.

"Blessed is that man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried; he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him" (Jam. 1:12).

Caleb thus became a witness and sign unto his contemporaries of the sureness of the Word of God. Certainly the lessons of the wanderings would convince him that this temporal life is not "*the Rest*" unto which the servants of God have been called. The Kingdom of God, the blessings promised to Abraham, must be far greater in magnitude and scope than was then evident.

"There REMAINETH THEREFORE, a Rest unto the people of God" (Heb. 4:9).

Forty-five years later Caleb comes before our notice again, in Joshua 14. He is not an old man as would be the case under natural circumstances. One by one his contemporaries in Egypt, his close relatives, had passed off the scene. They were all gone except Joshua. Caleb was as though 40 years old, yet he was 85. The weary struggle had not worn him down. He stood before Joshua just as he did years before:

"The Lord hath kept me alive, as He said, these 45 years, ever since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness.

"And now, lo, I am this day fourscore and 5 years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me; as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in" (Josh. 14:10-11).

Here is a testimony to the power of God to preserve from harm and danger, a testimony that the lives of His servants are always under His care—that as Jesus said, "Not one of them is lost." Certainly they shall be tried: some in one way, some in another. Some periods of witnessing are short, some are extended. God in His wisdom directs the course according to His purpose with us.

Transposing the statement of Caleb to Joshua into spiritual values, how fitting—after a lifetime of service through trial and temptation—that the *spiritual* strength is not diminished, that we are as strong for the warfare, both in overcoming the world, and for the preservation of the brotherhood, as when our strength was at its prime!

"He that endureth TO THE END, the same shall be saved."

"The hoary head is a crown of glory, IF it be found in the way of righteousness" (Prov. 16:31).

Finally let us note the portion of land which Caleb received—

"Moses sware in that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's forever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God" (Josh. 14:9).

And where had his feet taken him? To Mamre, the cave of Machpelah, which settlement later became known as Hebron. His thoughts had been upon the Abrahamic covenant, when he fulfilled his commission as a searcher of the land. The fruits of the land which were borne heavily upon the shoulders of others were secondary, in his estimation, to the EVERLASTING inheritance. Perhaps his associates thought his interest in the graves of their forefathers rather morbid, but to him it was a stirring confirmation of that wherein he had been instructed.

Caleb still had to drive out the giants from this portion of the promise. His receipt of Hebron as his lot did not mean that his warfare was over. This was not the eternal rest. But he had received the eternal promise—which was what he desired. And with the aid of God he accomplished what he had wanted to do 45 years before.

Let us not forget Caleb as a representative member of our race, as we associate together and recall the death of our Elder Brother. Some may think that a continual reminder of Christ's death is morbid. But that is due to a failure to understand man's position before God. It was designed by God as the only approach to life forevermore. Let us then "be patient, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord." We still have a few more giants to overcome.

Therefore let us go up, for "*we are well able to overcome them,*" with the aid of our Heavenly Father.

—E. F. H.

"LAY ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT"

The chief business of life is to "save ourselves from this untoward generation"; a business which involves the avoidance of many things which a man merely bent on entertainment might think proper to engage in, and the doing of many things which such a man would think unnecessary. Paul defines this important business in the well-known words:

"Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us and run with patience the race that is set before us . . . We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we let them slip."

Jesus expresses the same idea parabolically, when he says:

"If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off. It is better for thee to enter life halt or maimed than having two hands to be cast into the fire of Gehenna."

—Bro. Roberts

Let Him Curse; God Hath Bidden Him

"Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight? Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house, because thou hast despised Me" (2 Sam. 12:9-10).

The very next chapter begins to record the working out of this decree, in the case of Amnon's foolishness and sin. For two full years, Absalom quietly waited his time, plotting vengeance for his sister, and finally the opportunity came, and he slew Amnon, and David begins to feel the inescapable hand of God's righteous judgment.

The mother of Absalom, as far as is recorded, was the only foreigner among David's wives, and thus God works out the punishment of one sin through the consequences of another. Absalom, whose name, pathetically enough, means "*Father of Peace*," was the principal instrument of David's punishment; and David's extreme grief at his death, after all his treachery, seems to indicate a special attachment to Absalom, even above his other children, and a bitter realization of what might have been had he himself acted differently.

Three years Absalom spends in exile at Geshur, and two more in Jerusalem before the king is reconciled to him. Seven years have now passed. Having returned, Absalom goes about cunningly to steal the hearts of the men of Israel. How easily are people deceived by a fair show and smooth words! How shallow and unstable is human loyalty! And, above all, how sharply the case of Absalom brings out the fundamental baseness of human nature, teaching us to ever look with distrust upon our natural desires and reactions.

Paul speaks of the foolishness of those who compared themselves with themselves and consequently found nothing wrong. Comparing their actions with their own natural conceptions and thoughts they found that they agreed perfectly. *But what of the mind of God?* A man's own heart is no safe guide.

But there is a lesson even in Absalom's wickedness—the lesson of the unjust steward. Absalom yielded himself wholeheartedly to selfishness, and the murder of his own father was the logical conclusion, as he stood in his way. Having given himself over to evil, it would have been foolish to draw the line anywhere. He was wiser in his generation than those who go halfway into evil and still attempt to cling to an appearance of good, or those who but half-heartedly follow that which is good. Having chosen his course, he followed it through to the end and hesitated at nothing.

It was truly an evil, human course, but his pursuance of it is a lesson in single-minded perseverance. And his scheming patience, although directed to base and selfish ends, is an illustration of the latent powers in us all which are equally effective for evil or good.

Two years he quietly waited to avenge himself upon Amnon, but the wait did not dull the keen edge of his determination. How long before his insurrection he had harboured ambitions for his father's throne is not disclosed, but there is no haste in his methods—only a painstaking and tireless singleness of purpose and a long and skilful planning—so thorough that when the moment came all Israel was with him, and so secret that David was taken wholly unawares.

Absalom was strong-willed, clever, ruthless and patient—attributes which could have made him as much a power for good as he was for evil, if he had been moved by the wisdom that is from above, instead of that which is from beneath. God allowed him to go far on the course he chose, for it suited God's purpose to do so, and each successful step would further embolden him for the next.

But when the proper time came, God turned his wisdom to foolishness and everything he had taken so long to build collapsed like a house of cards, and destroyed him in its ruins.

"The Lord appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom."

What chance had Absalom's wisest scheming in the face of that? He was clever, and he prospered for a while, but the final chapter of his career revealed him as a pitiful and relatively insignificant tool in the hands of God Who was by bitter tribulation shaping the character of a far better man. In all things, *consider the end*.

The events connected with Absalom, tragic though they were, were not without a purpose; and even a certain amount of comfort, for David. The truest depths of friendship are only experienced in adversity; and the loyalty of Ittai the Gittite, and the faithful kindness of Barzillai the Gileadite, would go far toward bearing David up against the infidelity of his son. We are so constituted, in the mercy of God, that sorrow will add a keenness to the comfort of common blessings that are only shallowly appreciated in times of ease.

And the occasion, too, made possible one incident which, while galling at the time, brought out the underlying nobility and gentleness of David's character and would give him much satisfaction later as a bitter trial faithfully and commendably borne. That was the cursing of Shimei of the house of Saul, who viciously taunted David as he fled from Absalom, and insolently stoned him. When Abishai desired permission to destroy him, David said—

"Behold, my son—which carne forth of my bowels—seeketh my life. How much more now may this Benjamite do it? Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him. It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day."

Weak and human though he was in many respects, he was at heart in full harmony with the mind of God. He realized that these trials were a necessary chastening from God to tame his unruly desires, and that the better he endured them, the shorter they would have to be.

As we look back, David seems to stand out apart from all others in the history of Israel. Moses truly is a far more majestic and awe-inspiring figure; Abraham exemplifies the nobility of a patient, enduring faith through a long and weary pilgrimage; but it is into the heart of David that we enter most closely. His life seems crowded with every variety of experience, and ranges from the purest God-fearing courage of his youthful encounter with Goliath to the ugly depths of adultery and murder.

His life was a battle between the highest and most intimate spiritual conceptions of God on the one hand, and all the strong currents of human nature on the other. That he repeatedly failed is true, but what is far more important is that he freely and humbly recognized his failures and continued to press on, accepting every form of tribulation with unresentful resignation.

His life, on the whole, was a broken and frustrated one. A long period he spent as a hunted fugitive—a wanderer away from his country and kindred, attended by a motley following whose company must have been on the whole small comfort and a constant burden. Then, after his wanderings end and he finally becomes king and has subdued all his enemies, he stumbles into a grievous sin which plagues him without respite for the rest of his life.

Had Jonathan lived, much may have been different in David's life, but such was not the purpose of God. The affection between them was of the most exceptional character, calling for the strongest terms of description. In the friendship of Jonathan, David could have found satisfaction and guidance for the restless desires that led him into pitfalls. But it was God's will that he should learn alone.

After Jonathan's death, David seems to have found affinity with no one, and such comfort as he could get in the course of a life of disappointment and turmoil he must get by a direct and lonely approach to God by himself which, while infinitely more difficult, was perhaps in the ultimate for the best.

The Psalms could never have been written by a man who could find satisfaction and comfort in anything short of a direct and individual communion with God. And therefore, in the wisdom of God, it was Joab and not Jonathan who became David's lifelong companion, though such would never have been David's choice.

God's purpose with David was very high, and David had much to learn. Therefore considerations of his present comfort must give way to those which through long and bitter tribulation would develop in him the peaceable fruits of purity and righteousness.

The wisdom of God chose a vessel ideally suited to His purpose, and no small part of that purpose was the recording of the Psalms. The strong light of the inspiring Spirit, shining through every facet of David's character and experiences, threw as on a screen each detail of hope and despair, of failure and triumph.

Moses' character is made before we meet him as he comes on a divine mission from the wilderness to deliver Israel from bondage. But in the Psalms every aspect of David's development is laid bare before us. Christ alone combined the exalted and prophetic majesty of Moses with the keen humanity of David. Tried and tempted in all points like his brethren, he alone as the representative of mankind fulfilled all the experiences portrayed through David in the Psalms and emerged triumphant and unspotted from them.

David typifies the body of Christ, those whom Christ came to redeem, the chosen generation, the spirit willing and eager but the flesh weak, a man after God's own heart, who through much tribulation must learn the way to the kingdom.

But David, as the writer of the Psalms, was permitted to be the instrument by which Christ was encouraged and strengthened. And each of the members, too, can in some small way share in this honour. For it was for the joy that was set before him that he was enabled to endure, and that joy consisted in the love and affection of those who gratefully accept the benefits he procured.

Our participation in the victory is measured, therefore, by our affection for him, and the value of that vice-royalty is increased by each one that lays hold upon it.

Between Joab and David there was no affinity. David was a man of God. Joab was not. No greater gulf could separate two men than that. They lived in different worlds. David repeatedly struggled and fell, but from beginning to end he was a man of God, intensely loyal and devoted.

Joab was a man of the world. Wiser at times than David, and strangely enough, sometimes his perception rose higher than David's, but to the deeper currents of divine communion which were the basis of David's life, Joab was a stranger.

In his reaction to David's grief for Absalom, Joab is practical and wise. But David could see many things to which Joab was utterly blind. David could see that day many years earlier when the prophet Nathan had stood before him and had solemnly spoken of the great anger of God and the consequences he would have to suffer. David could now see the humiliation of Tamar and the murder of Amnon, his firstborn. He could see that now another wayward son had been taken, leaving behind an ignoble memory of treachery and dishonour, all the consequences of his own folly and sin. And he would wonder where and when the next blow would fall.

But Joab's rough counsel would sharply remind him that his pilgrimage was not yet ended. Those terrible words would always be before his mind—"*Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from thine house,*" and he would see dimly, stretching into the future, a continuation of that trail of wickedness and bloodshed which he had set in motion. And so, aroused once again by Joab's brusque prodding, he concealed his grief that no one would understand, and carried on. —G.V.G.

**"The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children
of men, to see if there were any that did understand,
and seek God. They are all gone aside" — Psalm 14:2.**

Many wonder about the countless millions that come and go entirely outside the scope of God's plan, but God has looked them all over. The material that God desires is very rare—almost non-existent—true humility that seeks God's will in all things and not its own—that realizes that man is nothing, and can never be anything outside of complete submission to and unity with the mind of God.

Christadelphians and War

Quotations from Christadelphian Periodicals, 1852-1952

Proving a Consistent, Public, 100-Year Stand

(Continued from last month)

1917, p. 397: The Christadelphian who has been "turned down" by the Tribunals is called upon to "join the Colours" which, of course, no genuine Christadelphian will do. He is then arrested, marched off to the Police Court and handed over to the military escort. He is then taken to the military barracks and given a suit of khaki to put on. Of course, he declines. In due course he is court-martialled and sentenced to imprisonment. The arrested Christadelphian should keep in mind (1) Always, and on every appropriate occasion, to let it be known that he is a Christadelphian (2) At all times to behave as a Christadelphian should.

1917, p. 373: Petition to the President, Senators and Representatives of the U.S.: "Your petitioners are members of a well-recognized religious sect known as Christadelphians. Their existing belief expressly forbids members to

participate in war in any form and their religious convictions are against the bearing of arms and any participation in war, in combatant or non-combatant capacity under the jurisdiction of any human government."

Letter received Feb. 5, 1917, from the Senate on Military Affairs Committee: "Your petition will be placed on file for the consideration of the Committee."

The Christadelphian Petition to Congress, signed by the ecclesias and brethren throughout the U.S., was presented in the House of Rep. by S. Hubert Dent Jr., Chairman of Military Affairs Committee, according to the Congressional Record (May 18, 1917, p. 2714).

1917, p. 376: In Canada: Petition seeking total exemption from military service. Sir Geo. E. Foster, of the Canadian Govt., was approached with the view of obtaining his assistance in having our Petition presented to Parliament. He has consented.

1917, p. 447: When a Tribunal has only granted exemption from combatant service, an appeal has been immediately lodged, with these words: "I am a Christadelphian, and I most respectfully declare that—no matter what the consequences may be—my Faith will cause me to absolutely decline all Military Service, combatant or non-combatant."

1918, p. 368: In New Zealand: The Minister of Defence has made the following reply: "The churches whose members come within the statutory definition of religious objectors are Christadelphians, Quakers, and Seventh-Day Adventists."

1918, p. 422: The Canadian Committee has just received word from the Govt. that they desire to pass an Order in Council as follows: "All Christadelphians who were baptized previous to Oct. 13, 1917 to be granted exemption from all forms of military service. Also those baptized since, under age 20, or children of Christadelphian parents." This has not been passed but is a Govt. promise.

1919, p. 65: The book "Christadelphians and Military Service" tells why and how the Christadelphians were exempted from military service. It traces the history of Christadelphianism in relation to militarism. (See below).

From book, "Christadelphians and Military Service" (published 1918):—

p. 49. "Christadelphian "Test Case" before Central Appeal Tribunal, London, Apr. 4, 1916, Verdict as follows: "The Appeal Tribunal has decided that the man be exempted from military service. The creed of this man's "ecclesia" or church forbids his taking the military oath or doing any work under military control."

p. 58: The fact of a brother's name being found in the Register (of Christadelphians) is accepted by the War Office without question as evidence that the brother is a bonafide Christadelphian and therefore a genuine conscientious objector.

p. 90: The position of the Christadelphian Body in Canada was referred to Justice Duff (Central Appeal Judge). His judgment was: "The Christadelphian Church of Canada is an organized religious denomination, existing and well-recognized in Canada, and was so on July 6, 1917, and that the tenets and articles of faith forbid the undertaking of combatant, and in fact any, military service."

p. 109: The War Office has issued a special Army Council Certificate, bearing the name Christadelphian, certifying that the bearer is "a Christadelphian and recognized conscientious objector to Military Service." No other religious or political body has been granted such a remarkable concession.

p. 110: In Canada, Australia, N.Z. and the U.S., the Christadelphian claim has been critically examined, and exemption provided by the Govts., so that our brethren can remain outside the Army.

From monthly magazine, "Berean Christadelphian" (London and Toronto):—

1924, p. 70: The followers of Christ were prepared to "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's," but they refused to become part of the Roman Army.

1924, p. 86: Christ's people are prohibited from drawing the sword. It is impossible that a Christadelphian can be a soldier. We are not to touch the conflicts of the world.

1928, p. 153: If there had been a civil war in Judea, would Jesus and his Apostles have enrolled themselves under either party? The teaching of the Epistle of James is proof they would not. Jesus did not instruct his disciples to enrol for the defence of the State against the Romans. His kingdom did not belong to that order of things (kosmos), therefore his servants were not to fight. Be not drafted; go to prison rather.

1929, p. 463: (Describing a booklet, How the War Office granted Christadelphians Exemption from Military Service): It faithfully records the position of true Christadelphians.

1929, p. 216: The world's whole constitution is based on the idea that evil, individual or national, must be resisted. We, however, are strangers and pilgrims in this order of things, and must not become entangled. Such service is not for God's servants in any form—police, military, naval or air.

1934, p. 97: The believer is a "conscientious objector." He refuses to bear arms in the defence of the State. This is the only position a faithful Christadelphian can adopt.

1934, p. 344: In the American Civil War it was necessary that the brethren— non-participants in strife—should be known by a distinguishing name. The name "Christadelphian" was chosen.

1936, p. 214: Being under law to Christ, we are forbidden to fight. "All that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Our position has been made clear to the Authorities.

1938, p. 105: Anyone understanding what Christ's commands require could never consent, nor by force be compelled, to be a soldier in any Gentile army in any capacity.

1938, p. 213: As far back as 1860, Dr. Thomas had expressed his conviction and those of his friends that the bearing of arms was inconsistent with faithfulness to Christ's commands. To this faithful stand, bro. Roberts gave his wholehearted support. This was the kind of witness we were able to produce to prove that conscientious objection to military service has been the denominational characteristic of the Christadelphians.

1939, p. 209: Our attitude toward military service is well known to the Government. It is a consistent record extending to some 80 or more years—duty to stand aside from all forms of Military Training or Service.

1939, p. 367: War is upon us. Are the brethren and sisters ready to take the attitude so clearly marked out for us in the Scriptures and so faithfully maintained by Christadelphians in the last Great War? The answer is, Yes!

1940, p. 20: A number of our brethren have been before the Tribunals. Without exception they have been given exemption from all forms of military service.

1940, p. 259: Several cases have been before the Courts this month and in each case exemption from all forms of military service was granted.

1940, p. 346: On the foregoing doctrinal grounds (given in full, three pages), Christadelphians appeal for exemption from military service.

1941, p. 353: The position always taken up by us since 1860 is that we cannot become part of any State organization in any part of the world for the prosecution of such States' political policy, whether for offence or defence.

1942, p. 376: Served notice to join the Home Guard, bro. Boyd at once stated his objection on grounds of conscience. Exemption from all forms of service was then given.

1943, p. 34: Religious bodies with international membership are today doing their best to destroy one another because of the prior call of nationality. This is the great tragedy that has overtaken religion.

1943, p. 91: The children of God have no right whatever to make war except by God's express order and leadership. They cannot fight until the Lord returns to the earth because that is the order of the Lord himself.

1943, p. 98: It is impossible for Christians to assume the character of soldiers. As there is no nationality in Christ (Gal. 3:28), it is clear that the only way to avoid the great crime of murdering one another is to avoid nationalism altogether.

1943, p. 254: Many other Christadelphian doctrines can be shown by history to have been held by the early Christians. The early Christians refused to join the state forces or to kill on behalf of Caesar.

1944, p. 34: The main difference is: While the early Church was absolutely separate from the world, organized Christianity today splits itself up into national fragments and each section—if called upon to do so—fights the other.

1944, p. 115: Bro. P. W. Goodwin appeared before the Tribunal last month. The decision was: "The applicant has satisfied the Tribunal that he conscientiously objects to military service."

1944, p. 162: The true Christian cannot be a politician, king, soldier or policeman.

1945, p. 104: The early Church held the same position of neutrality that Christadelphians hold today. Tertullian: "You enquire whether a believer may enter the Military Service. How will the Christian man war without a sword which the Lord has taken away? In disarming Peter he unbelted every soldier." (Similar quotations from Justin Martyr, Ireneus and Origen.)

1945, p. 255: With confidence in God and such a background, you will be in a strong position to prove to the Selective Service Officials that you are a real Religious Conscientious Objector to all forms of military service.

1946, p. 117: A Letter to Congress: House Military Affairs Committee: ". . . Since then (time of Civil War) Christadelphians the world over have consistently maintained their religious convictions against participation in any form of military service, and this is recognized in these United States, in Canada and in Great Britain."

1948, p. 142: Since it was made known that Civil Defence would be linked with the Army organization, several letters have been received asking that steps should be taken to make our position clear to the Authorities.

1949, Oct., p. 1: Doctrines to be rejected—that we may serve in any way in the military forces or other state forces as the Police. Complete separation is essential.

1951, p. 302a: "Extracts from U. S. Govt. publications establishing the historic position of the Christadelphians as religious conscientious objectors to participation in war in any form, combatant or non-combatant—a position publicly and consistently held since their organization as a distinct body over 100 years ago: also extracts from encyclopaedias and general reference books to the same effect" (3 pgs. of extracts follow).

* * *

Recent extracts showing foregoing stand is consistently upheld:

1940, 116: We regret to announce that we have been obliged to withdraw our fellowship from bro. who, having neglected the readings for years, has drifted into a worldly manner of life and is not at one with us on the matter of Military Service.

1940, p. 426: It is with regret that we have had to withdraw fellowship from bro. & sis. for continued absence from the Table, and for disorderly walk in regard to resisting evil.

1941, p. 287: We regret to report our withdrawal from bro. for making munitions of war.

1941, p. 352: It has been our sad duty to withdraw from bro., he having put his name down for military service.

1942, p. 61: We have been compelled to withdraw fellowship from sis. , as she has joined one of the war organizations for women.

1942, p. 125: We deeply regret to say that bro. is confined in Wormwood Scrubs prison owing to his refusal to take up non-combatant service in the Army.

1942, p. 157: We regret having to report our withdrawal from bro., who has joined the Air Force.

1942, p. 187: In Jan. of this year we withdrew our fellowship from bro. , who insisted on working in the Navy Yard, contending that he saw no wrong in it.

1943, p. 24: We have been obliged to withdraw fellowship from bro. for renouncing the Truth and accepting non-combatant service.

1943, p. 54: On Dec. 14 two of our number appeared before the Police Court on the charge of not registering for Civil Defence duties, and were heavily fined.

1943, p. 56: During Dec. seven brethren and 2 sisters were prosecuted for failing to register for compulsory Civil Defence duties.

1943, p. 150: Last month 2 of our members were brought before the Police Court for a second time for refusing to register for Civil Defence duties (fire-watching), and were again heavily fined. The law of Christ remains unchanged from month to month, so our attitude—based upon his law—must remain unchanged, notwithstanding the consequences.

1943, p. 279: The writer has had the painful experience of appearing before the magistrate for refusal to fire watch. A total fine of 15 pounds, 5 shillings, was imposed. As to remain in the present employment would have meant further liability, the writer has had to relinquish his work where he has been employed for over 15 years.

1943, p. 306: It has been our painful duty to withdraw fellowship from bro. for joining the Merchant Navy, and disorderly conduct which was causing reproach to the Truth. The Merchant Navy is an armed and disciplined service under rigid govt. control and is incompatible with service to Christ. The close dovetailing of its work with that of the other armed services makes it impossible in wartime conditions to serve God acceptably while in its service.

1945, p. 279: We sorrowfully report withdrawal from bro., who joined the Merchant Marine.

1946, p. 81: Bro., because of his refusal to serve in the armed forces, was committed to prison. With regret we must report the withdrawal of fellowship from bro., because of long continued absence from the Lord's Table, and because of his attitude and action in military matters.

1943, p. 174: Bro., who was sentenced to prison for 2 yrs. on account of his refusal to join the armed forces, has been paroled.

1947, p. 41: We regret we have had to withdraw from sis. for countersuing at law.

1951, p. 256: We have had the sad duty of withdrawing from bro. for becoming a cadet midshipman, which involves him as a member of the Naval Reserve.

Current Events Fulfilling Prophecy

"He shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness"—Psalm 94:23

ISRAEL POPULATION up 104,000 in 73. Now 3,300,000 Jews, 500,000 non-Jews. (Det JN 3:22)

IRAN (Muslim but not Arab) supplied military assistance to. Arabs in battle against Israel. (Nwk 12:3)

GREAT REJOICING IN KREMLIN over trials & tribulations of US & allies. "New Times," a weekly printed in Moscow in many languages for propaganda abroad, proclaimed happily: "There could hardly be a better commentary on Western European 'solidarity' than the energy crisis." France particularly came in for much praise in Soviet press for its opposition to US in energy crisis. (USN 3:4)

NOTE: The oil crisis certainly revealed both the pitiful helplessness and the sordid pusillanimity of once-proud Europe. Russia may well rejoice, and thank France for her helping hand.

CHICAGO POLICE CORRUPTION. In past 3 years, 86 police indicted, 48 convicted, 407 fired or forced to quit because of corruption. Two extortion rings alone netted over \$½-million for police operators. Two police convicted for roles in drug traffic deaths. Many sickening cases of police brutality documental in daily papers. (Tm 2:25)

NOTE: When law enforcement agencies themselves become corrupt, then a nation's plight is sad indeed. And that seems to be the case in US. There is no middle alternative between enlightened submission to the divine Word on the one hand, & descending to the level of the beasts on the other. Man thinks he can cast off divine restraint without sliding all the way down to the animal level, but God has decreed otherwise, and God is not mocked.

BRITAIN IN TROUBLE. Deep-rooted political & economic problems: zero growth, rising unemployment, lower living standards, increasing inflation, higher taxes. In 73, a \$5.3 billion trade deficit—worst in history. Increased oil prices will add at least \$5 billion to deficit in 74. Loss of public confidence in political & financial institutions, & in ability to compete internationally. Electorate's faith in politicians rarely been lower. Consumer confidence lowest ever. Stock market dropped 40 pet. in 18 months. Britain's back is to wall. (USN 3:4)

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Britain is bleeding to death economically. In Jan., an all-time record trade deficit of \$880 million.

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In February Britain again had record trade deficit: over \$1-billion—worst in history. (Tm 4:8)

NOTE: We wonder if Britain will come to her senses, get out of the miry Catholic politics of scheming Europe, and take a strong and wholesome stand on the side of God's chosen people. She will be in trouble until she does.

DEMOCRATIC GOVTS. all over world are up against wall. US, Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, Canada—even little ones like Belgium, Denmark & Israel—suffering serious problems of leadership. So widespread are democracy's problems that democracy itself is under examination. Main trouble with democracy is that politicians, to get votes, shy away from necessary but unpopular measures. (USN 3:18)

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Europe in dejection & disarray. Some of most dedicated pan-Europists are even questioning democracy's future. Basic reason for sickness is popular disenchantment with unresponsive govts., which cannot manage crises or communicate with public. On all sides they're swamped with scandals.

There's no longer a convergence of national interests in Europe. Willy Brandt sees "signs of rupture everywhere," as real power flows from govts. to pressure groups: students, minority parties, oil companies, for example. Brandt fears democracy could be replaced in 20 to 30 years by radical Communism or fascism. (Tm 3:18)

ANOTHER SHORTAGE: LEADERS. Profound political disarray in West. Many asking whether democracy is resilient enough to respond to challenges of times. Staggering cost of energy & raw materials threatens to topple framework of economic relationships built by great powers since WW II. Velocity of today's problems seems to outstrip ability of democratic leaders to come up with solutions.

Things promise to get worse. Oil & energy crisis could be only first in a global series: raw material shortages, overpopulation, famine, pollution, & international monetary chaos are cases in point. Parliaments & legislatures crippled by archaic organization & mired in trivialities. Politicians are on the make. Politics is simply not attracting people with talent. (Nwk 3:18)

NOTE: As bro. Thomas so clearly foresaw, by the light of the Word, democracy—man's ability to wisely and fairly rule himself—is proving to be an empty dream. It is collapsing everywhere, and the world is drifting back to the efficient cruelties and oppressions of dictatorship. It is essential and fitting that man should demonstrate his utter incapacity for self rule before the establishment of Christ's righteous reign to save man from his own bungling course of corruption and self-destruction.

ETHIOPIAN MUTINY: ARMY TAKES OVER. Haile Selassie gave in to rebels' demands: turned over reins of authority to military. Educated officers have long been unhappy over appalling gap between rich & poor, & inequities of feudal agricultural system. (Tm 3:11)

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A stunning turn of events. After 43 years of 1-man rule, Selassie no longer in control. Trouble festering for years. Last year, because of govt. ineptitude, millions of cattle & 100,000 people died in a drought. Political picture is chaotic: 1000s of students & radicals took to streets of capital, waving placards with such revolutionary slogans as 'Land to the Tillers.' (Nwk 3:11)

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Seems as though Ethiopia headed for blow up. On one side, Church & landowning nobility: on other, students, workers, & army. (Nwk 3:18)

NOTE: Another callous and brutal US-backed ecclesiastical dictatorship has been toppled by the roaring of the sea and the waves. US seems to manage to always be on the wrong side—except in the case of Israel.

RUSSIA'S MIGHT. Goldwater says, "US is 2nd to Russia in every category of military strength. They're going to have ability to convince our allies & enemies that we're not going to stand up. They became equal to us about 4 yrs. ago in aviation & navy: they've always been superior to us on ground. As for front line strength: of our (2.1 million) Army, we have 9 men backing up every man on the front line; Russia (in their 3.8 million) has 1 in the front for every 2 in the rear. We don't need 9 men backing up every combat man." (USN 2:11)

"BLACK HOLES." The concept strains belief. If a star is large enough—at least 3 times as massive as the sun—it will eventually die in a grand cataclysm. As its nuclear fires begin to burn out, the stellar gases, no longer supported by heat and radiation, begin falling toward the star's core. Moving at tremendous velocities, they crush together, forming a sphere only 2 or 3 miles across, so dense that each cubic inch weighs trillions of tons.

The small sphere has a gravitational field so strong that no radiation even light—can escape from what has become a totally invisible 'black hole.' If this theory is correct, there could be countless black holes among the billions of stars. (Tm 12:10)

NOTE: A fascinating illustration that man is but dimly scratching the merest surface of the vast universe of knowledge, & can never postulate positive knowledge in anything, as he is so hasty to do. The fantastic "epicycles" of the learned Copernicus satisfied the scientists of his day: they are now an amusing relic of ingenious ignorance—and so will today's solemn theories be tomorrow. There is only one true knowledge: the knowledge of God that leads to life, & it comes only through humble submission & joyful obedience & purity of heart.

POPE FIRES MINDSZENTY. Last week, Pope removed stubborn, 81-yr.- old hero from office. Mindszenty was irate. He had become a thorn for Vatican, taking every opportunity of assailing Hungarian Govt., obdurately remaining a stumbling block to Vatican policy of improving relations with E. Europe & normalizing church activities there. (Tm 2:18)

NOTE: A sad old figure left over from a past era. The Pope is busy mending fences with godless Communism, & so the once-lauded hero of Hungarian resistance has been thrown to the wolves.

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE, known more familiarly as "Confession," has fallen on lean days in Roman Church. Where quiet lines of penitents once gathered to wait near confessional boxes on a Saturday, a priest may now sit on church steps waiting for even 1 sinner to show up. There's a new theology of sin that does not stress the damning "mortal" sins of pre-Vatican II days.

NOTE: The Catholic Church is taking a new modern shape in the new modern world. The world & Catholicism must come together, & so there must necessarily be many adjustments in the process. The Church has already climbed far from her 19th century flesh-eaten-&-burned nadir (Rev. 17:16) toward the brief "sit as a queen & am no widow" delusion (Rev. 18:7), but her plagues shall come in one day, for strong is the Lord that judgeth her.

RUSSIA-US ARMS RACE still very much alive. Last month, Russia made first full range tests of SS-19 multiple-headed ICBM. Is US falling behind? While US was fighting expensive & inconclusive Viet War, Russia was spending lavishly to improve its weapons. Both seemed now poised at beginning of another round in nuclear arms race that could cost billions. In '60, Russia had 225,000 research scientists & engineers & US had 400,000. Today Russia has 625,000 and US has 550,000.

One awesome example of Russia's improving military technology is 500- ton sea-skipping aircraft, largest plane in world. Employing revolutionary new principle, the jet blasts from its 8 engines is aimed to hit water & bounce back under main wing, creating a lifting bubble of air, enabling it to fly 350 mph only 25 to 50 feet above water—low enough to make radar detection difficult. Can make 2-to-3 day voyages up to 7000 miles. Loaded with electronic gear, monster is new & ominous means of hunting US nuclear subs.

Russia's Navy of 221 major combat vessels sails all oceans of world. Russia's deadly SA-6 missile knocked down US-built jets with fearful accuracy in Mideast War. Now costs US taxpayers \$12,400 to maintain each person in uniform, was \$3,400 in '50. (Tm2:11)

IN TROUBLED US: NEW WAVE OF RELIGIOUS FERVOR. There's a lack of interest in traditional religious issues today. Many want their own inner experience, distinct from general forms; they turn to anything that's out of ordinary. To many, there's no purpose in life; the complexities of modern life have knocked them off their feet. They can't relate what's happening to anything in their faith experience. What many are looking for is the emotional &

personalized experience promised by groups that are evangelical in zeal, fundamentalist in doctrine, & stern in their call for total commitment.

Ministers from many of main denominations have become ultra-liberal: they go to Harvard or Yale & preach philosophy, politics & social change. Many of established churches present Jesus Christ as a nice kind of option in a multiple-choice system. And they see the Bible as something that just contains some spiritual thoughts—but you can pick & choose what suits you.

Not all seekers of spiritual fulfillment are looking to Christianity. Zen, Buddhism, Yoga, Transcendental Meditation, Krishna Consciousness & others draw great followings. Believers in witchcraft, spiritualism, astrology, & even Satan, gather: rites are well-attended by devotees who claim a variety of supernatural powers.

The social upheavals of recent years, personal frustrations, inflation, domestic & international insecurity—all combine to provide a climate in which both old-time & new faith flourish. Given the present conditions in US & rest of world, the resurgence of interest in old & new religions seems likely to continue with undiminished force. (USN 12:17)

NOTE: What a potentially fertile field for the Truth of God—the Truth of life, & happiness, & wellbeing. But people will believe anything except the simple scriptural Truth. "Ye shall find Me when ye shall seek for Me with ALL your heart." Here is both the key to success & the explanation of failure. Let us be among the very few who seek incessantly with ALL the heart. There is no other way.

"JUMP JETS" NEW WEAPON Jump jets could revolutionize use of huge aircraft carriers that are now core of US Navy. Jump jets need no catapult: twice as many can be efficiently based on attack carriers. By putting them on small helicopter carriers, assaults can be conducted from offshore with greater flexibility. Amphibious operations with jump jets become independent of beaches, tides or weather. Jump jets take off and land vertically, can fly sideways & backwards. Developed and produced in England, they're being used more & more in US Navy (USN 12:17)

NOTE: Thanks to British ingenuity, another deadly weapon has been added to the horrible & continuously on-going revolution in the art of war.

END OF SKYLAB. In 84 days, the 3 astronauts traveled 34½ million miles in 1214 revolutions around earth, watched sun rise & set over 1300 times. Now Skylab will be ghost ship, circling earth 14 times a day for another 7 years till it plunges back into atmosphere & burns up. (Tm 2:11)

NOTE: Truly a marvelous achievement, not to be belittled—to hurl men & vast machines into precise & delicate orbit around the earth, and—in the vast realm of the sky—to bring together & lock up the pieces in perfect alignment while everything is traveling 20,000 mph—to send men up & bring them down several times without mishap or injury. Very brave & clever men. One must marvel at the drive & determination & dedication to solve all problems & overcome all obstacles & contrive all devices necessary, in this, & in the even more incredible undertaking of landing on, living on, & returning from the moon. How do we compare in OUR devotion & dedication to an infinitely more glorious & profitable undertaking: even attaining to the divine nature? Do we stand ashamed & condemned by the example of the children of the world in their wonderful but completely meaningless & futile achievements?

RAW MATERIALS REVOLT. US has become dependent on imports of key industrial metals. Ability of Arabs to swiftly treble oil prices, & inability of West to do anything about it, has had electric effect on countries that produce key materials. Guinea has called meeting of bauxite producers. Zaire & Zambia plan to coordinate copper policy to keep prices up.

Fully 80 pet. of world's copper comes from 4 countries; 2 countries produce 70 pet. of world's tin; 4 countries produce 95 pet. of bauxite.

US has already exploited many of its easily mined minerals. Of the 12 basic materials crucial to modern industry, US imports large amounts of 7: zinc, tungsten, tin, nickel, bauxite, manganese & chromium. In next 10 yrs., iron & lead will be added.

After decades of stability, world prices of these materials are taking off. US is unpopular in many countries. With demand for minerals strong, they could reduce supply to US & find eager buyers elsewhere. (Tm 1:28)

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Growing talk that nations producing everything from bauxite to zinc may form cartels to restrict output & raise prices. We could be confronted soon with shortages of iron, steel, aluminum, copper, tin, rubber. (Nwk 1:28)

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No doubt US's vulnerability: it imports 100 pet. of natural rubber; 93 pet. of manganese; 92 pet. of cobalt; 92 pet. of graphite; 91 pet. of chromium; 81 pet. of aluminum; 76 pet. of platinum; 75 pet. of tin; 71 pet. of nickel, & so on.

By '85, US could be depending on imports for ½ of all its raw materials, including iron & lead. US, with under 6 pct. of world population, uses ⅓ of world's mineral output, including 56 pct. of all natural gas. US becoming "have-not" nation in some basic raw materials (USN 2:4)

NOTE: Here are US's feet of clay. Here is the significance of Russia's mushrooming navy—clearly out to seize domination of the world's seaways. US, with increasing profligacy & abandon, has been flinging its own rich natural resources to the winds of greed & luxury. It is laying itself wide open to many new raw material blackmails similar to the Arab oil blackmail.

620 MILLION MILES TO JUPITER. After a grueling 21-month journey thru space, US spacecraft Pioneer 10 plunged thru Jupiter's deadly radiation belts on Dec. 3, swooped to within 81,000 miles of the planet, & sent back pictures that promise to unlock age-old mysteries. As millions of bits of information streamed into computers, excited scientists declared that centuries-old theories "out of window . . . we must rethink our theories."

Jupiter has 12 moons, 4 of which orbit backwards, contradicting the orbital patterns of nearly every rotating object in solar system, a fact that has long confounded scientists. (USN 12:17)

NOTE: A marvelous example of man's achievement & ingenuity. Jupiter travels 29,000 mph on a sweeping curve. The spacecraft traveled 21 months & went over 600 million miles to intercept the planet's orbit at exactly the precise place & time. Radio commands were sent over that vast distance, & TV pictures radioed back. Truly, as foretold for the last days, knowledge has vastly increased, but not wisdom, nor man's knowledge of God, nor of guiding & controlling himself. What potential! What failure!

NIGERIA 8th LARGEST OIL PRODUCER: 2.3 million barrels a day. Revenues in '74 will be at least \$8 billion. Many new millionaires. As yet, none of wealth has trickled down to average man: only 1 child in 5 goes to school because parents can't afford it. Per capita income \$100 per year. Discontent rising. Worker says, "No matter what we poor do, the money goes into big man's pocket." (Nwk 2:4)

NOTE: Nigeria was once very British, when tiny little Britain ruled most of Africa. Today Nigeria, like the rest of Black Africa, has turned against Israel. Note again the age-old picture of human misrule: wealth to the greedy, powerful few.

US MEDICAL CARE. Each year in US 1000s die needlessly, or needlessly soon, or have life irreparably damaged because they've had incompetent medical care. Medicine remains largely hit & miss: one doctor will prescribe twice as much antibiotic as another, or prescribe a needlessly dangerous drug. One surgeon hurries to operate; another spares the knife.

Size of minority who are incompetent, unethical, or both, is unknown. Too few standards of ethics or practice have been set: & that many doctors will strenuously resist any attempt to strengthen or enforce them became evident last week in anti-standards revolt within American Medical Assn.

There's a broad spectrum of incompetent & unwarranted surgery. One reason for abundance of dubious operations may be simply that there are too many surgeons. US has twice as many in proportion to population as Britain, & Americans undergo twice as many operations as Britons; yet on average die younger. In nonsurgical areas, medical practice still more imprecise.

US Federal Govt. pays out \$18 billion a yr. for health care. (Tm 12:17)

NOTE: A pitiful picture, especially in view of such pompous pretensions. How little has changed since New Testament days: "She had suffered many things of many physicians, & had spent all that she had, & was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse" (Mark 5:26). How sorely the world needs the one true Physician who shall "rise with healing in his beams."

DROUGHT & DEATH IN AFRICA. Worst drought in recorded African history stretches across entire waist of Africa from Mauritania to Ethiopia. Many mothers have had to sacrifice weakest children by drawing emergency rations for them, & then using the food to feed the others. Traditional public weeping & wailing for dead has been abandoned: people have lost the will to cry.

Thousands of children with matchstick legs, protruding ribs & swollen stomachs continue to die. New woe added last week when swarms of locusts began eating their way thru part of the area, reducing meagre food supply still further. (Tm 12:17)

NOTE: A terrible picture. Let us not banish it from our attention. Let us be sure that all we do with our time & goods is in moral harmony with the sad fact that much of the world is in constant misery, & a large part of it in catastrophic calamity. What decent mind can endure any hint of self indulgence while so much of the world is bathed in hopeless sorrow & suffering? All we have & are must be given to the work of God—which is the eventual banishing of sorrow & filling the earth with His glory. In such dreadful times, nothing less is morally permissible or spiritually satisfying.

GENTLE 20th CENTURY. Torture just as widespread as ever. "Amnesty International" last week issued 224-pg. book accusing 60 countries (most of them UN members) of practicing torture. It can happen anywhere in world. No one is immune. (Nwk 12:24)

NOTE: Man does not like to face the scriptural reality that in his natural state he is a beast, & that the human race has been degenerating since its creation. Sixty nations is about 1/2 the world. Hardly a pretty picture.

US FARM EXPORTS have jumped from \$2.8 billion in '53 to \$17.1 billion in '73. US has become greatest producer of food & fibers world has ever seen, turning out far more goods than its citizens need. US now exports 3/4 of its wheat; 2/3 of its rice; 1/2 its cattle hides & soybeans; over 1/3 of its cotton & tobacco; 1/4 of its feed grains. US produces 90 pct. of all soybeans, 3/4 of all corn, over 1/2 of all wheat & flour moving in international trade. (USN 1:14)

NOTE: What a potential for power & prosperity! What a paradise US could be, if greed & selfishness & evil could be purged from human hearts, & if the love of God & study of His Word could replace stupid, mindless animal pleasures & sports & TV & liquor.

DECLINING US EDUCATION. Most heated educational debate in '50s centered on "why Johnny can't read." That issue continues, but real problem now is what to do with Johnny if he can't read. Illinois School Supt. says: Employers complain to me that kids can't fill out a job application, they can't spell, they can't read, they don't have much capacity to function

In Oakland, Cal., 1/3 of high school seniors have reading & math skills below 8th grade level. Scores in national Scholastic Aptitude Tests have declined for 10th yr. in row. Are schools not doing as good a job as they used to, or are US kids simply getting dumber? (Tm 12:31)

* * *

EDUCATIONAL FOLLY. Growing controversy over once-popular academic innovation: replacing traditional grades with simple "pass" or "fail" marking systems. Pass / fail emerged in late '60s, washed in by tide of student protest: students felt it was "degrading" to be compared with others in ability & performance. In pell-mell rush for harmony, by '71 3/4 of US colleges were offering pass / fail. High schools & grade schools were quick to follow the fad. Today pass/ fail is fading: it reduces motivation, amount learned & goals. Pass / fail has failed. (Tm 2:4)

NOTE: Modern unscriptural folly in child training—based on false theories of human nature—is beginning to take its ominous toll. God can easily make the wicked destroy themselves.

ARAB BLACKMAIL. Both Europe & Japan have felt the chill of economic mortality as result of Arab oil blackmail. They'll never have same sense of economic security again. What's happening everywhere in world is slow death of philosophy of continued growth that has been regarded as indispensable to world well-being. (Nwk 12:31)

NOTE: Suddenly the long-worshiped fetish of economic growth is exposed to be a self-destroying dead-end, devouring its deluded devotees. The nations build themselves up to a dizzy whirl of lust & luxury that takes more & more mad treadmill effort to maintain. And now the long-oppressed poor nations—the former slave colonies of the rich West—are awaking to their potential, & threatening to turn off the taps. And the simple old solution—gunboat diplomacy—will no longer work because the nuclear-armed Russian colossus stands watching, posing as the poor nations' defender & friend.

US ARMY CONDITIONS. Lately, marines on Okinawa have taken to sleeping with weapon handy—not for protection against foreign enemy but from fellow marines. In recent months, crime rate among marines on Okinawa has doubled: 94 muggings in one month alone: risk on base is higher than in off-base bars. New arrivals are advised to walk about camp in pairs. (Nwk 3:18)

NOTE: This is ominous. The US Army, especially the Marine Corp, has had a high and proud tradition of discipline and loyalty, and on this US has built her world power. But the once-sound fabric of US society is crumbling everywhere, and this is infecting the Army like everything else. It's time for a strong and fresh new power to come to the fore, and Russia is that power by divine destiny.

GERMANS ARE TOPS ECONOMICALLY on both sides of Iron Curtain. In Common Mkt, Germany leads with \$4170 per capita gross national product. On other side, East Germany leads Communists with \$2730; 2nd place Czechs had \$2440. East Germans now ahead of 2 Common Mkt. nations—Italy & Ireland—& very close to Britain, whose figure was \$2870. (USN 12:3)

NOTE: Germany is the key to Europe. United to Russia—as bro. Thomas nearly 150 years ago clearly foresaw it must be—it will form an irresistible combination, & the foundation of the power of the Beast. See where poor Britain has slipped to.

NORTH SEA OIL: Billions of barrels that could ease Europe fuel shortages. In year or 2, oil will be flowing in generous quantities from British, Norwegian & Danish wells. Britain already gets 4 billion cubic feet of gas daily from North Sea. By '75, North Sea will supply 20 pct. of Britain's oil; by '80, over 75 pct. (USN 12:24)

NOTE: Another very strange quirk in the developing world panorama. Oil is suddenly king; & Britain suddenly finds her own local & assured supply. We can foresee it being a factor in the coming rift between Britain & Europe.

RUSSIA'S SUPER-PLANE. Moscow has deployed its 2000 mph superplane, the MIG-25 Foxbat, on the NATO border, in a position to reconnoiter almost the whole NATO area. Russian pilots flew the Foxbat from Egypt on scouting missions over Israel during October War, & US-built Phantoms (US & Israel's No. 1 planes) couldn't catch them. (Nwk 12:31)

NOTE: Another foreboding note of things to come. Russia cannot properly feed & house her own people, but she can—by concentrating the national effort & scientific resources upon it—build a war machine before which no power will be able to stand. And this she is doing, while US squabbles & plays.

The Berean is covered financially through the October issue.

A Message of Love and Concern

"Esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake"—1 Thess. 5

TO MY BRETHREN AND SISTERS with whom I have been in fellowship, in some cases, for a number of years: Loving Greetings.

In this year of 1974, we are living in a critical period of the world's history, for we see Israel surrounded by the Arab nations in a holocaust of blood and fire. The recent inhuman, repugnant and senseless raid in Maalot, in which 18 young students were murdered and many wounded, is a savage example of what men will do when they are determined to have their own way regardless of consequences.

As we turn to the Household of Faith, we are reminded of Paul's prophecy recorded in Acts 20:30, where he said—

"Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

It is important to note that the word "perverse" means to distort or misinterpret. The practice has been going on since the days of Paul, and even in our day there are those who should know better who are more concerned with divisions and their petty importance than preparation of themselves for the times of refreshing now so closely drawing nigh.

There is one indisputable fact that all of us should face and acknowledge. Brother Dr. John Thomas unearthed the Truth of the Gospel that had been buried for many years in clerical rubbish. His work in Elpis Israel and especially Eureka reveal him as a man with mental powers far beyond any writer on matters relating to the Bible during the past 120 years. It is folly to act as if this fact does not exist.

Brother Thomas was followed in the work of the Truth by brother Robert Roberts, whose works prove him also to have been in possession of mental powers far superior to any of his critics. All we have to do is to examine the various books and articles written by these two brethren, for their works to prove what I have said of them.

One feature that is deeply saddening is the fact that the present generation does not do this, and is not familiar with the development of the Truth in the past 120 years. Those who are being taught the Truth should be informed more carefully of our great debt, in God's providence, to these brethren. If each one as they came into the Truth were given a copy of the life of brother Thomas, and strongly urged to study it, they would learn how the work started and how it was developed over the years. They would value our original sound foundations, and be more anxious to preserve and defend them.

In addition to the life of brother Thomas, every beginner should read the life of brother Roberts. If they did, they would obtain added information that would cause them to have a greater and deeper appreciation of the Truth. But it must be made clear that the purpose of reading the lives of these two brethren is not to become familiar with them personally, but to know and understand and appreciate what they accomplished in the work of God, and how careful we should be to guard it against constant new speculations.

Quite often we hear the cry, "We must contend earnestly for the Faith." True indeed! But let us be certain that our contending is in harmony with the whole counsel of God, and that it is based upon love, as expressed by Paul in Eph. 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 might be filled with all the fulness of God."

Your fellow-sufferer and humble pleader of the mercy of God,

—George Gibson

Bible Questions
COMPLETE THE PAIR
QUESTIONS

- | | | | | | |
|---------|-----------|------------|------------|-------------|----------------|
| 1. Ox | 7. Pale | 13. Little | 19. Rough | 30. Deadly | 41. Writer's |
| 2. Pot | 8. Idle | 14. Royal | 20. Three | 31. Nether | 42. Familiar |
| 3. Sea | 9. Sour | 15. White | 21. False | 32. Barren | 43. Parched |
| 4. Red | 10. Side | 16. Forty | 22. Upper | 33. Badger | 44. Earthen |
| 5. New | 11. Shoe | 17. Sheep | 23. Green | 34. Chosen | 45. Weaver's |
| 6. Vile | 12. Stiff | 18. Horse | 24. Filthy | 35. Graven | 46. Morning |
| | | | 25. Silver | 36. Modest | 47. Precious |
| | | | 26. Rotten | 37. Widow's | 48. Seething |
| | | | 27. Mixed | 38. Hottest | 49. Pestilent |
| | | | 28. Living | 39. Ranging | 50. Miserable |
| | | | 29. Fatted | 40. Itching | 51. Outlandish |
| | | | | | 52. Untempered |

ANSWERS

- | | | | | | | |
|------|------|---------|----------|---------|----------|------------|
| Pot | Rags | Vessels | Promises | Bodies | | |
| Mite | Neck | Room | Leach | Heifer | Fig Tree | Monsters |
| Star | Goad | Tales | Smith | Battle | Garment | Millstone |
| Calf | Horn | Skins | Water | Poison | Inkhorn | Witnesses |
| Beam | Corn | Stone | Women | Mortar | Taverns | Priesthood |
| Bear | Fold | Sherd | Spirits | Grapes | Latchet | Comforters |
| Ears | Moon | Lucre | Fellow | Images | Pastures | Multitude |
| | | Horse | Apparel | Stripes | Chamber | Generation |

June

Answers

WHO WAS . . .

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Fat—Eglon | 14. Ruddy—David | 33. Weighed—Belshazzar |
| 2. Sad—Nehemiah | 15. Liars—Cretians | 34. Drunken—Noah |
| 3. Wise—Solomon | 16. Naked—Adam | 35. Beguiled—Eve |
| 4. Tall—Saul | 17. Heavy—Eli | 36. Guileless—Nathanael |
| 5. Sick—Trophimus | 18. Swift—Azahel | 37. Unstable—Reuben |
| 6. Bald—Elisha | 19. Red—Esau | 38. Hardened—Pharaoh |
| 7. Wild—Ishmael | 20. Vexed—Lot | 39. Eloquent—Apollos |
| 8. Dumb—Zacharias | 21. Subtil—Jonadab | 40. Churlish—Nabal |
| 9. Lewd—Aholibah | 22. Polled—Absalom | 41. Translated—Enoch |
| 10. Lame—Mephibosheth | 23. Outrun—Peter | 42. Very aged—Barzillai |
| 11. Blind—Bartimaeus | 24. Asleep—Jonah | 43. Free born—Paul |
| 12. Short—Zacchaeus | 25. Strong—Samson | 44. Very meek—Moses |
| 13. Tired—Jezebel | 26. Devout—Cornelius | 45. Very bold—Isaiah |
| | 27. Hanged—Haman | 46. Malicious—Diotrephes |
| | 28. Smooth—Jacob | 47. Profitable—Onesimus |
| | 29. Careful—Martha | 48. Lefthanded—Ehud |
| | 30. Wound up—Ananias | 49. Tender eyed—Leah |
| | 31. Thirsty—Sisera | 50. Safe & sound—Prodigal |
| | 32. Roasted—Zedekiah | 51. Superstitious—Athenians |

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