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And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David;) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known to us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

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The Magnificat

"And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: amid the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His Kingdom there shall be no end." - Luke 1:30-33.

FOR OUR Christmas meditation we have selected the words recorded in Luke 1:46-55. These, the exalted utterance of a humble Jewish maiden, were invoked by the inspired greeting of her kinswoman. For, "it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she spoke out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? And, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord." - Luke 1:41-45.

Moved by the deepest emotion, Mary breaks out in an ecstatic rhapsody, the Magnificat. Like Miriam, Deborah, Hannah; or Judith, she utters a song of joy. In the words of Geikie: "The whole hymn is a mosaic of Old Testament imagery and language and sows a mind so colored by the sacred writings of her people that her whole utterance becomes, spontaneously, as by a second nature, an echo of that of prophets and saints. . . . Mary, like them, must have, lived in a constant realization of the presence and special providence of One with whose gracious communications to her people she had thus filled her whole thoughts. A Jewish puritanism, of the loftiest and most spiritual type, must have been the very atmosphere in which she moved, and in which her child was hereafter to be trained." Truly, "all generations shall call her blessed."

However, it is not the Virgin mother's person but rather the spiritual emotion and eloquence of her Magnificat that is our immediate concern and to which we now turn for detailed consideration. Each exulting strain of that song which anticipated the first Christmas will refresh our spirits as we recall our own cause for joy and gratitude to, "the Giver of every good and perfect gift."

"SING FORTH THE HONOR OF HIS NAME"

"And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior."
- Luke 1:46, 47.

How natural for her mind, imbued with its religious heritage, to raise itself in adoration of her God. The intimation made to her was one which she could hardly grasp in its full significance. Her Son was to sit upon the throne of His father David, and reign over the house of Jacob, founding a kingdom which should endure for ever. The gratitude within, welled forth in notes of heartfelt praise. And to us who know the full significance of that wonderful event, Mary seems to speak in the Psalmist's words: "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together." Our echoing words of praise have already been written for us: "Blessed be Thou, Lord God of Israel our Father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in, the heaven and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as head above all.. Both riches and honor come of

Thee, and Thou reignest over all; and in Thine hand is power and might and in Thine hand- it is to make,, great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious name." We may all say: "My soul shall be joyful in the, Lord: it shall rejoice in His salvation." - Psa. 34:3; 1 Chron. 29:10-13; Psa. 35:9.

"WHO REMEMBERETH US IN OUR LOW ESTATE"

"For He hath regarded the low estate] of His handmaiden; for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call-me blessed." -- Ver. 48.

For centuries had the pious women of Israel each cherished the hope that of her might be born the long promised Deliverer. And now this incomparable honor, worthy of the greatest Queen, had become the lot of this humble maid. Well might she rejoice at the goodness of God. And is it not so with us? What shall we say as we consider our own even greater portion? Hath not the Lord considered our "low estate"? "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called, but God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, bath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that, no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and deliverance: that, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." (1 Cor. 1:26-31.) As of our glorious Forerunner it is written (Psa. 72:17), "All nations shall call Him blessed," so of those "born in Zion" we read: "Blessed and holy is he that bath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." - Rev. 20:6.

"THE LOVING KINDNESS OF GOD"

"For He that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is His name. And His mercy is on them that fear Him, from generation to generation." - Ver. 49, 50.

God had thus favored Mary because she feared (reverenced) Him, for His mercy is on such, from generation to generation. We marvel at her calmness and poise at the strange announcement of the angel. Her answer is the ideal of dignified humility, and meek and reverend innocence: -- "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." We echo Elisabeth's words: "Blessed is she that believed."

As we turn to consider our own portion in the Lord's inheritance it is with the joyful testimony: "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." For have we not prayed to Him-"Show me Thy Ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths. Lead me in Thy truth, and teach me: for Thou art the God of my salvation; on Thee do I wait all the day. Remember, O Lord, Thy tender mercies and Thy loving kindnesses; for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to Thy mercy remember Thou me, for Thy goodness sake, O Lord." - Psa. 25:4-7.

And did He not hearken to us? "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." (Psa. 34:6.) "I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He bath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our. God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord. Blessed is the man that. maketh the Lord his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies. Many, O

Lord my God, are Thy wonderful works which Thou hast done, and Thy thoughts which are to usward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered." - Psa. 40:1-5:

"THE LORD'S ARM EXALTED"

"He hath showed strength with His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the , imagination of their hearts." - Ver. 51.

What a depth of wisdom lies hidden in these words, far beyond their primary significance to the humble soul that uttered them. She had indeed been told that her child, from its birth, should be called the Son of the Highest, and 'the Son of God. But the human mind is slow to grasp great truths, and needs to grow into a comprehension of their meaning: it cannot receive them in their fulness till it has been educated, step by step, to understand them. Long years after this she only partially realized the import of such words. In her Son's youth she was perplexed to know what was meant by His answer (Luke 2:50), when He stayed behind in the Temple; and years after that she failed, once again, to realize her true relations to Him. (John 2:4.) Nor does she seem to have risen to the full sublimity of her position, and of His, while He lived, though the deathless love of a mother for her child brought her to the foot of the Cross. - John 19:25.

Not so with us, however, to whom the "Arm of the Lord" has been revealed. We have grasped the full import of that birth in Bethlehem and recognize in Him "the Dayspring from on high that hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." (Luke 1:78, 79.) "O sing unto the Lord a new song; for He hath done marvelous things: His right hand, and His holy arm, bath gotten Him the victory." (Psa. 98:1.) "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly." - Psa. 118:15, 16.

MESSIAH OF NATHAN'S LINE

"He bath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He bath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He bath sent empty away." - Ver. 52, 53.

Through His Prophet Jeremiah God had said: "Behold the day is coming, that I will raise unto David a Righteous Branch, and a king shall reign and prosper. In His days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His name that Jehovah proclaimeth Him, Our Righteousness." - Jer. 23:6, Young's translation.

This Branch had been expected to be a lineal descendant of David through the royal line of Solomon, but a comparison of various Scriptures proves this not to have been the Lord's will, inasmuch as Solomon is shown to have subsequently lost God's favor. (See Psa. 132:11; 1 Chron. 28:5-9; 1 Kings 2:4; 1 Kings 11:9-13.) Consequently we find that our Lord's descent from David is through the humbler line of Nathan as traced by Luke (3:31) who styles Joseph "the son of Heli," that is, the son-in-law of Eli. By birth, Joseph was the son of Jacob, as stated in Matthew 1:16. By inspiration Mary expresses this truth in her song of thanksgiving: "He hath *put down the mighty* from their seats, and exalted them of *low degree*." The diadem and crown were removed from Zedekiah, the last king of the line of Solomon, to be given, to him of the line of Nathan whose right it is -- the Son of David who also is his Lord.

We also, dear brethren, have been the recipients of grace because of the rejection of those whose primary portion it was. For it is written: "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity: but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." (Rom. 11:7, 22.), "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." (Eph. 2:11-13.) "Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high; who humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth! He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; that He may set him with princes, even with the princes of His people." - Psa. 113:5-8.

"GOD'S PROMISES SURE"

"He hath holpen His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy; as He spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever." - Ver. 54, 55.

Two thousand years.. had elapsed since God's great promise to Abraham, that in his seed all the nations would be blessed. With prophetic insight Mary recognizes a decisive step in the fulfilment of God's unchanging purpose, and closes her song on this note of joy. Later, when her babe was born, the aged Simeon who had also waited for the "Consolation of Israel," took Him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace,, according to Thy word:, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; alight to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel." - Luke 2:29-32.

Today we have reached a crucial period in the history of the world. The lofty spiritual sentiments of the Magnificat find little real response in the weary hearts of men. In this day of crass materialism, faith in God is well-nigh extinct. Men do not look to Him for help in their present world-wide distress. "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Pet. 3:13.) In the not far distant future there is to be a stupendous change in this earth's affairs and the astonished masses of mankind will be hold the full realization of the glorious hope breathed forth in the song of the humble maid of Nazareth -- "Great joy which shall be unto all people." Again shall be heard those words of the heavenly host, now to be echoed by all humanity:

"GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST,

ON EARTH, PEACE, GOOD WILL TO MEN."

- *W. J. Siekman.*

"In Due Time"

In Thy due time, our Heavenly Father, shall be known
Thy gracious plan, which now is hid,
Except unto Thy saints alone.
O, glorious day, when Thine all-wisdom, justice, power and love,
The whole creation shall approve!

In His due time, O, blessed Jesus,
Thou shalt see The travail of Thy soul, and shalt
Be satisfied eternally;
Thine agony on Calvary -- the price that Thou didst give,
Shall cause the dead again to live!

In God's due time, O, pilgrim on the "narrow way,"
Thy painful journey ended, darkest
Night shall turn to brightest day;
Thine every trial, then, thine every tear, shall prove a gem
To beautify thy diadem!

In His due time, O, weary, groaning, sin-cursed Earth.
The Lord will wipe away thy tears,
And bring the promised "second birth";
And there shall be no pain, nor any death in that blest day
When sin and sorrow flee away!

In His due time, angelic choirs shall sing again
In grander strain that heavenly message,
"Peace on earth, good will toward men!"
And every knee shall bow, and every loving heart confess
The Christ who comes to reign and bless!

- G. W. Seibert

"The Kingdom of God Is Not in Word but in Power."

1 Corinthians 4:20.

IN OUR English language we use the word "power" with much latitude as meaning authority, intensity, effectiveness, persuasiveness, that which is established, potent, etc. The word in 1 Corinthians 4:20 is translated from the Greek *dunamis*, which includes all these, but also has the implication of the miraculous. (See *Strong*, No. 1411.)

THE SPIRITUAL PHASE OF THE KINGDOM

In these last days our thoughts of a kingdom have been more or less turned to the Millennial reign and restitution, but it was not in this respect that the Apostle referred to the fact that "the kingdom of God is not in word but in power." A kingdom has two phases: (1) the ruling power and authority, and (2) the territory and peoples governed by that authority. It is in the first of these divisions that we are interested; that which we denominate the "spiritual phase" of the Kingdom! that which was commended by Jesus when he said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." And to the seventy who returned elated that the demons were subject to them through his name, Jesus said, "Rejoice not, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:17-20). Although the power to cast out demons, and in any way nullify the works of Satan, is certainly desirable, it is to be our work in Christ's Millennial reign, when made joint-heirs with him, rather than now. Let us not lose sight of this. "The *present* mission of the Church is the perfecting of the saints for *the future* work of service

We seek to emphasize the fact of the separateness. of the Church -- those whom God recognizes as his. It is the truth set forth in Ephesians 2:15, where the Church is denominated "one new man," separate and distinct from either Jew or Gentile. Also in 1 Corinthians 10:32: "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God." What a tremendous thing it is that "even when we were dead in sins, God, who is rich in mercy, quickened us together with Christ, and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies" (Eph. 2:4, 5). Yes, even now "we are the sons of God"; for "as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (1 John 3:2; Rom. 8:14). We have been "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son" (Col. 1:13). Note carefully, though, that it is not the mere historicity of Jesus' death and resurrection that produces this transition, but the bringing to bear upon the conscience the necessity of this (death and resurrection) in order to a right relationship with Deity; and during this Gospel dispensation it is the portion of those who will accept Jesus' crucified life as their sin-offering, and his resurrected life as empowering them to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4-11; 2 Cor. 5:17-21).

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST -- POWER

But although the Apostle states that the Kingdom of God is not in word but in power, yet the Kingdom does come to us by means of words, but they are words attended with power. One of the prominent examples of this is in the conversion of Cornelius: he was "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house; which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always"; yet, exemplary character that he was, he was told to send to Joppa for Simon Peter, "who shall tell thee *words*, whereby thou and thy house shall be saved" (Acts 10:1; 11:13, 14). And it was while Peter was yet speaking "words" that "the holy spirit fell on all them which heard the word" (Acts 10:44).

But someone may ask, What message is it that has such attending power? It is the plain, unvarnished preaching of a crucified and risen Jesus. It is the message that was told in fragmentary and incomplete form in ages preceding the advent of Jesus and preached as a great salvation since then, first by Jesus himself, then by those commissioned and empowered by him to do so. How nicely this is declared in Hebrews 1:1-3: "God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in times past unto our fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by a Son"; not *his* Son, as in the *Authorized Version* (nor is *it through* his Son), but *by a* Son; for although Jesus is God's Son, yet the point of contrast is greatly lost by such a reading. The emphasis is on the contrast between the fragmentary, and piecemeal, messages of the Prophets, who were but messengers delivering messages, the full import of which they did not know, and a Son who spoke not things he did not understand, but himself was the embodiment of the message which he brought -- who was the final, full revelation of the Father, God; "the brightness of *glory*, and the express image of his person." He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:7-9).

TRANSFORMED BY THE SPIRIT

This message of reconciliation so affects those who receive it as to make them "epistles of Christ, known and read of all men" (2 Cor. 3:1-3). The Gospel of Christ has a transforming power. This was that which delighted the Apostle Paul, and which he disclaimed as being anything of himself. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit, for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 3:5, 6; 4:5).

A cursory reading of this passage (2 Cor. 3:1-4:6) may result in our missing the whole point; especially if we mind the chapter division after verse 18 of chapter 3. Generally we stop there instead of continuing on to the 6th verse of chapter 4, where the idea is reaching its immediate termination. Paraphrasing 2 Corinthians 4:6: "God, who in creation caused light to shine out of darkness, has caused light to shine into the once darkness of our being [heart, mind], to give the vision of the glory of God as it is displayed in Jesus Christ."

A SURPASSING GLORY

Briefly reviewing the passage: the Apostle, after disclaiming any sufficiency of his own, assures his readers that it is no mere moral code that he preached, for history had proved that the Law could never commend; it only condemned. "It was a ministry of death." The glory of the Law was in this, that it served to reflect beforehand the glory of the Gospel ministration in somewhat the same manner as the moon reflects the brightness derived from the sun. And that which is being wrought in the saints of this Age is so glorious that it will never be superseded by anything more glorious; for (paraphrasing) the ministration of the Law was indeed glorious; it so far exceeded the darkness of heathenism with its mystic religions and groping philosophies concerning God and morality that it was an attraction to those who were looking for definiteness in these things. This, the Apostle says, was typified in the shining of Moses' face on his coming down from the presence of God in the Mount. Yet glorious as this Law dispensation was, it has no glory at all in view of the fact that it is now superseded and outshined by a more glorious ministry. For the ministry of the spirit is changing those who were enemies of God into the very likeness of God (2 Cor. 3:18). And nothing more glorious will ever succeed this. This is the persuasion of the Apostle. The "hope" expressed is not the conviction of being administrators of a new covenant in the Millennium, when God will pour out his spirit on all flesh, for great as that dispensation will be (and the calling back and awakening of the dead, the restoring of the race will surely be glorious), it will be but a small thing in comparison to the spirit's power being exercised now, that

power which is fitting us for "an inheritance undefiled, incorruptible, and which fadeth not away." It is spoken of as "the *exceeding greatness* of his [God's] power" (Eph. 1:19).

SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE

Brothers and sisters in Christ, our calling is no mean thing! God has raised us from the dust, yes, even from the dunghill, to set us among princes and to make us inherit a throne of glory (1 Sam. 2:8). Too long and too much, in our midst, we speak of "restitution." Our witnessing has been to a coming Millennial reign. Sometimes, it seems that when one speaks of our being "seated with Christ in the heavenlies," and of our eternal redemption in Christ, it is to many a strange sound. "If we have been risen with Christ, let us seek those things which are above where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Let us set our affections on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1, 2).

Consider the mighty work that God is accomplishing through the ministration of his Word and spirit; for "we ourselves were sometimes [in time past] foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy spirit, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:3-7).

Note well these several points: (a) "we ourselves" were in times past deadly sinful; (b) "not works of righteousness which we have done" -- not even our "accepting the Truth," should such acceptance make truth mere philosophy, reasoning; (c) according to his mercy; (d) washing of regeneration; (e) renewing of the holy spirit; (f) through Jesus Christ; (g) heirs of God.

A HEAVENLY FAMILY

Heirs of God! The whole groaning creation waits for their unveiling (Rom. 8:19, marginal reading). The purpose of God in furnishing the ministry of this Gospel Age is definitely declared by Paul in the Ephesian letter: "for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." As is shown in Ephesians 4:4, the "body" is one. We are members one of another. The edifying, building up, erecting the Body is the *main purpose* of this present Gospel dispensation. The perfecting, the maturing of an individual saint, though great in itself (Luke 15:7), is not the end; even though each individual saint is an integral part of the Body; the Body, the Temple of God, is the end! In Ephesians 4:13, the Apostle does not say, "till we come to the unity of belief," or "till we come to an agreement on interpretation," for faith is not a synonym for belief or interpretation; faith is a spiritual quality, and it is only in faith that we shall all come "unto the full stature of a new man in Christ."

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God"; "our citizenship is in heaven." Let us not be of those "having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof" (2 Tim. 3:5). "Let us hold fast the beginning of our confidence" (Heb. 3:14). Let us not be content with present attainments but reach forward to the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, "knowing that he which hath begun a good work in us," is both able and willing to finish it (Phil. 1:6; 2:13). God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20).

"The Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (1 Cor. 4:20).

- F. A. Essler

Love

"Make Love your aim." - I Corinthians 14:1. R. S. V.

HOW can we recognize Divine Love in ourselves?

Love is an element that can never be forced. If the thunderstorm could speak with voice of mortals and were to say to us, "Love me, or I will crush you with my power," that would not make us love the thunderstorm. If the North Wind could speak and were to say, "Love me or I'll blow you into the ocean," that would not make us love the North Wind. If some tyrannical potentate were to try to force our love under pain of incarceration or death, he could not possibly succeed, because love is incapable of being coerced. When springtime comes to the world, with all its glory of leaves and flowers and springing grass and clear blue skies, with singing birds, with murmuring of streams, breezes filled with fragrance, and that sweet, invigorating atmosphere that causes us to revel in the luxury of sensation; ah, then no one needs say to us, "You must love the springtime."

When the roses bloom again and the lilies lift their bright chalices to catch the golden caress of the sunbeams, no one needs to tell us to love these beautiful flowers. When some little child smiles up into our face, from its crib, no one needs to exhort us to love the little child. Such things as these we love freely, naturally, spontaneously, joyfully, and because we can't help doing so. And the same is true of us in our relationship to God, only in a higher, nobler and holier sense. When we come to know what God is, how that all we have hoped or dreamed or imagined or conceived of goodness exists in him in its very quintessence, in the very highest degree of its excellence; then we must love God. We love Him because we can't help doing so. As the hart pants for the water brooks, and upon finding the crystalline pellucid stream, bends down and drinks and drinks to the absolute satiety of its being; even so, wrote the bard of Israel, "pants my soul for Thee, O God." So we drink a full draught at the great eternal well-spring of love divine.

And love has certain properties that are inseparable from it. One of these is bountifulness. God Himself is remarkable for this. He might have made just one kind of tree but He made many hundreds of different kinds. He might have made just one color, but He made all the colors of the rainbow. Suppose He had made everything blue-sky, houses, earth, water, etc. -- surely man would also have become "blue." When building the human body, He set up a magnificent framework of 206 bones, and endowed man with wonderful muscularity, endurance, and powers of nobility. He constituted the human eye the most wonderful camera on earth. Here the retina picks up the rays of light and the optic nerves transmit them to the brain and we have the sensation of sight.

When we consider the ear of man, we find another marvelous apparatus. Here the tympanic membrane gathers the sound waves and the auditory nerves pass them along to the brain, and we can hear. In the throat we have the vocal cords, and we can transmit, by means of the voice, the most metaphysical thing in the world -- thoughts manufactured in the gray matter of the brain.

God might have made us one armed, but he gave us two arms. We also have two feet. The sense of smell is wonderful, so is that of feeling. Then we enjoy our bodily operations. It is a pleasure to see, to hear, to smell, breathe, to eat, to lie down when tired, and when we are in a state of good health, even work is enjoyable.

Jesus Christ may be regarded as the most altruistic being that ever walked this earth. He, too, was bountiful in the highest degree. The simple record of His life says, "He went about doing good." His miracles were not whimsical, but were performed at the call of humanity's needs. Therefore He was a great Humanitarian. One evening He was followed to a desert place by a vast throng of people. His disciples wanted him to send the people away that they might go into the villages to buy food, but He said, "Give ye them to eat. And then He performed the miracle of the loaves and fishes. We know not how this was done, but it was an exhibition of divine power. Could the disciples have looked behind the scenes, they might have seen angels working on the job.

When someone had neglected the ministry of washing the disciples' feet—a custom of the times -- Jesus performed this service. When the lame, the sick, the halt and the blind came to Him for aid, they came not in vain. His benefactions were not confined to a chosen coterie of friends. We are told that, "He had compassion on the multitude, for they were as sheep not having a shepherd." The highest benevolence was manifested by Him throughout the course of his earthly career.

Those who have espoused the tenets of Christianity should likewise be altruistic. They should daily endeavor to make application of this Golden Rule and do to others as they would have others do to them. Jesus defined the law of Israel as love for God and love for one's neighbor. When asked, "Who is my neighbor," He told the story of the good Samaritan. A Jew fell among thieves who robbed and left him for dead. A Priest and a Levite passed him by and then a Samaritan ministered to him and saved his life. "Now," said the Master, "who was neighbor to him who fell among thieves?" "He that had compassion on him." And our Lord said, "Go and do thou likewise."

From the epistle of James we take the following: "If there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, and ye have respect to him that weareth the *gap* clothing, and say unto him, 'Sit here in a good place,' and say to the poor man, 'Stand there, or sit under my footstool,' are ye not partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? What doth it profit my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works, can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked or destitute of daily food, and one of you say, 'depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled,' notwithstanding, ye gave them not those things that are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it have not works is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, 'Thou hast faith, and I have works; show me thy faith without thy works and I will show thee my faith by my works.' Ye see then that by works a man is justified and not by faith only. For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead. - James 2:2-5, 14-18, 24, 26.

WHAT WOULD YE HAVE DONE?

We read the story of the life of Jesus. The simple narrative makes a tremendous appeal to the heart. We marvel that such a person was eventually turned down and put to death. We feel sure that we ourselves would not have treated Him so. Oh, so many things we think we would have done for Him. We would have shown Him friendship and love all along the way. Suppose that Jesus were to visit us today and put to us this personal question, "What would you have done for me had you lived on earth when I was here?" Perchance we would say, "Lord, I would have made a home for you." No doubt then He would reply, "Ah, that would have been fine, for I had no home of my own. What else would you have done?"

"I would have helped you bear the cross to Calvary."

"You really would?" He says, "Well, only one man did help Me, and he was compelled to do so. But it is a grand thought you have, that you would have assisted in such a way. What else would you have done?"

"Why, Lord, I would have breathed words of love and of sympathy to you when you were on the cross, to the very last moment of your life."

"Ah, that would have been wonderful. You see, no one actually did such a thing as that. But you really think you would have done those things?"

"Yes, Lord, I think so."

"But you are not sure. That is, not confidently sure."

"No, not quite sure."

"Well, then, I'll tell you how you can be sure. If you would have done these things for me when I was on earth, you are doing these things today for those about you. To be sure you can't do them for Me personally because I don't need them. I am now invested with a glory that you know nothing about. But down on that earth where you dwell there are persons whom I love, and whatever you do for them, I'll reckon as having been done for me. If you would have made a home for me, you are making a home for them. If you would have assisted me, you are assisting them. Therefore, you need no longer guess, but can know beyond the possibility of a doubt exactly what you would have done for Me."

"PURSUE LOVE" (1 COR. 14:1, ROTHERHAM)

Some one has said that kindness is a LOVE gauge that the whole world can understand. That is to say, LOVE is the universal language. Professor Drummond said, "LOVE is not a thing of enthusiastic emotion. It is a rich, strong, manly, vigorous expression of the whole Christian Character -- the Christian's nature in its fullest development; and the constituents of this great character are only to be built up by ceaseless practice."

"LOVE itself cannot be defined. Light is something more than the sum of its ingredients -- a glowing dazzling, tremulous ether. And LOVE is something more than all its elements -- a palpitating, quivering, sensitive, living thing. By synthesis of all the colors, men can make whiteness; they cannot make light. By synthesis of all the virtues, men can make virtue; they cannot make LOVE. We brace our wills to secure it. We try to copy those who have it. We lay down rules about it. We watch, we pray, but these things alone will not bring LOVE into our nature. LOVE is an effect, and only as we fulfill the right conditions will we have the effect produced.

"Contemplate the LOVE of Christ, and you will have LOVE. Stand before that mirror, reflect Christ's character, and you will be changed into the same image. There is no other way. You cannot love to order. You can only look at the lovely object and fall in LOVE with it, and grow into likeness to it. LOVE begets LOVE. It is a process of induction. Put a piece of iron in the presence of an electrified body, and that piece of iron for a time will be electrified. It is changed into a temporary magnet in the presence of a permanent magnet, and as long as you leave the two side by side, they are both magnets alike. Remain side by side with Him who LOVED us and

gave Himself for us, and you too will become a permanent magnet, a permanently attractive force. That is the inevitable effect of LOVE."

When we get LOVE into our lives, we become effluent like the sun. When LOVE is strong enough, opposition goes down before it. "A soft answer turneth away wrath." We cannot come in contact with those who possess LOVE without feeling its power. And in the very nature of things, every kind word bestowed upon the suffering souls around us reacts upon us so as to increase our LOVE. The same is true of every kind deed we do. The Master of LOVE did not withhold His benefactions even from publicans and sinners. The needs of others afforded Him numberless opportunities for service, and he grasped these opportunities through the swiftly passing days.

When we get to the end of life's journey, may we feel that we have not lived in vain. It will not be the dollars we have earned, or the fine houses we have reared that will help us then. But if we have preserved our faith in God, and our love for him, and for our fellow men, and if we have helped to lighten their load, then we shall be blessed, "soothed and sustained, by an unflinching trust, approach our grave, as one who wraps the drapery of his couch about him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

- *W. Sargeant*

"Even at the Doors"

*"What will be the sign of thy presence, and of the consummation of the age?"-Matthew 24:3 (Diaglott).
"When ye shall see all these things, know that he is near."-Matthew 24:33 (margin).*

IN THE previous installment of this series (September-October 1980 *Herald*), on page 71, in our discussion of 2 Thessalonians 2:2 we noted first, that instead of "Day of Christ" the phrase in this verse should read "Day of the Lord, or preferably, "Day of Jehovah."

In the second place, we observed that, when the Apostle had been with them, he had told them, not once, but frequently, that certain developments must precede the coming of the Day of Jehovah. - 2 Thess. 2:5.

A third point noted was that those certain developments are referred to in the context. According to 2 Thess. 2:3, one of them was "the falling away" or "the apostasy," as the word *apostasia* is translated.

In regard to this word *apostasia* the question had been raised as to whether "departure" was a possible rendering. We said that it was, and promised, in a footnote on page 30, to discuss . this possible rendering further. This we plan to do in the following paragraphs.

That "departure" is a possible rendering of the Greek word *apostasia* is indicated, in the Amplified Bible, in a footnote to 2 Thessalonians 2:3. The complete footnote there reads:

"A possible rendering of apostasia is 'departure [of the church].'"

The careful student will note that, in this footnote, the words "of the church" are in brackets, indicating that those three words are "*words or comments not actually expressed in the immediate original text.*"

It is also worthy of note that, while admitting "departure" to be "a possible rendering," the Committee of Scholars responsible for the translation given in the Amplified Bible, *did not themselves adopt it*, but used the word apostasy, in their translation of verse 3, as the following quotation shows:

"Let no man deceive or beguile you in any way, for that day will not come, except the apostasy comes first - that is, unless the [predicted] great falling away of those who have professed to be Christians has come - and the man of lawlessness (sin) is revealed, who is the son of doom (of perdition) . . . Daniel 7:25. . . ."

Kenneth S. Wuest, late Professor of New Testament Greek at the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, *does* adopt the word "departure" in his *Expanded Translation of the Greek New Testament*. His translation of 2 Thessalonians 2:3 reads:

"Do not begin to allow anyone to lead you astray in any way, because that day shall not come except the aforementioned departure [of the Church to heaven] comes first."

Once again, the careful student will note that the words "of the Church to heaven" are in brackets, Professor Wuest, by the use of brackets, indicating that the five words contained therein *constitute interpretative material*.

Mr. Wuest tells us, in his "Preface to Paul's Second Letter to the Thessalonians" that the change from the A. V. "falling away" to the word "departure" preferred in his *Expanded Translation*, "is a very important and serious change and demands from this translator [that is, from himself] a detailed explanation." This explanation he proceeds to present in his next several paragraphs. The points he seeks to establish there, may be summarized as follows:

- 1) The word apostasia means departure. Whether the departure is a departure of men from the true faith, or a departure of the Church to heaven, is not indicated in the word apostasia, but must be determined from the context.
- 2) The translators of the A. V. made the mistake of failing to take into consideration the definite article before the word apostasia. (Instead of the letter "a" they should have used the word "the.")
- 3) Wherever the Greek article is used, it points to a *previous* context. Failure on the part of the A.V. translators (to recognize the Greek article) led them to make a further. mistake, namely, to look for guidance (as to the meaning of the word apostasia) to a *subsequent* context, which they found in 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12, a passage which, admittedly, speaks of an apostasy from the faith.

They should have looked to a *previous* context, namely, the departure of the Church, mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17.

In examining Professor Wuest's three points, as summarized above, we may say at once that we know of no scholar who would dispute the accuracy of his first and second points.

In regard to his third point: Whether the error (of translating "a" instead of "the" before apostasia) on the part of the translators of the A. V. led them to look to a subsequent context for guidance, we have no means of ascertaining. However, we do know that their error has been corrected by numerous later translations; by all of them, in fact, that we have had opportunity to examine. Among these may be mentioned the English Revised Version (1881) and the American Standard Version (1901). The translators of *these* versions were not led to look to a *subsequent* context for guidance as to the meaning of the word apostasia, yet their understanding of that word, as shown in their translations, is the same as that given in the A. V.

Moreover, it is clear that the Committee of Scholars responsible for the translation given in the Amplified Bible were not led to a *subsequent* context for guidance either. Not only were they, themselves, aware that they should look to a *previous* context, but they made their readers aware of this also. They did so in two ways:

1) By supplying the word "predicted," in their translation; and

2) By going back to the prediction they had in mind. This took them back much further than 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; further back, even, than the time mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2:5, (the time when the Apostle had been with them). They went back to the Old Testament, to the prediction of the prophet Daniel, (Dan. 7:25), as they indicate in the scriptures cited at the close of their translation, *as we saw in the quotation given in an earlier paragraph.*

In closing this discussion, we submit a few definitions of *apostasia* from the works of recognized scholars. It will be noted that while they might admit "departure" as a "possible rendering," that word has not been included in their definitions by any of them.

1) *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon* (page 67).

A falling away, defection, apostasy. In the Bible, namely, from the true religion. Acts 21:21; 2 Thess. 2:3.

2) *Vine's Expository Dictionary* (page 73).

A defection, revolt, apostasy. Is used in the New Testament of religious apostasy.

In Acts 21:21 it is translated "to forsake"; *literally*: thou teachest *apostasy* from Moses.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:3 "the falling away" signifies apostasy from the faith.

3) *Bullinger's Lexicon and Concordance* (page 274).

The apostasy, namely, the one foretold by him, 2 Thessalonians 2:5, and by our Lord, Matthew 24:10-12.

- P. L. Read

"Alone." (Deut. 32:12.)

"The hill was steep, but cheered along the way
By converse sweet, I mounted on the thought
That so it might be till the height was reached;
But suddenly a narrow winding path
Appeared, and then the Master said, 'My child,
Here thou wilt safest walk with Me alone.'

"I trembled, yet my heart's deep trust replied,
'So be it, Lord.' He took my feeble hand
In His, accepting thus my will to yield Him
All, and to find all in Him.
One long, dark moment,
And no friend I saw, save Jesus only.

"But oh! so tenderly He led me on
And up, and spoke to me such words of cheer,
Such secret whisperings of His wondrous love,
That soon I told Him all my grief and fear,
And leaned on His strong arm confidingly.

"And then I found my footsteps quickened,
And light ineffable, the rugged way
Illumined, such light as only can be seen
In close companionship with God.

"A little while, and we shall meet again
The loved and lost; but in the rapturous joy
Of greetings, such as here we cannot know,
And happy song, and heavenly embraces,
And tender recollections rushing back
Of pilgrim life, methinks one memory
More dear and sacred than the rest, shall rise,

"And we who gather in the golden streets,
Shall oft be stirred to speak with grateful love
Of that dark day when Jesus bade us climb
Some narrow steep, leaning on Him alone."

"Peace, to Men of Good Will"

'Be not afraid' For lo! I bring you good tidings of a great joy, which shall be for all the people: That there hath been born unto you this day a Savior -- who is an Anointed Lord -- in the City of David! ... Glory in the highest unto God. Anon earth peace, to men of good will." - Luke 2:10-14, Rotherham, and Tischendorf Footnote.

THE thunder of burly guns, reverberating today in the ears of "all people" of earth, well-nigh drowns out the sweet strains of the angelic Proclamation echoing down the corridors of time, from that first Christmas morning. Instead of the promised peace, the art, the science, and the practice of war are still, after nineteen centuries, the chief preoccupation of mankind.

It is therefore no wonder that men generally have come to regard this heavenly Proclamation as being in the same category as the Santa Claus tradition -- a pleasant story for children, a tender reminder of a young mother and her babe, "lying in a manger," and so of all motherhood and childhood, of sweetness and light; and, perhaps, of a kindness of intent on the part of heaven and of a God who means well, but cannot do much practically to end the woes of earth.

Because of the long delay and apparent failure, the sweeping significance of the Proclamation has been generally overlooked or disbelieved. Still do "the kings of the earth *set themselves*, and the rulers take counsel together, [unwittingly] against Jehovah and against His Anointed." The lords of earth -- of the present order -- would not dare set themselves against the Creator of the Universe or against His Son, did they recognize that *They* are the authors of the "bands" and "cords" that hamper them. These comparatively slight hindrances on the reign of selfishness and evil, during the past six thousand years, have been mostly through what the Apostle calls "the foolishness of preaching" -- *mere talk*. A modern and typical instance of the continual conspiracy of earth's rulers to rid themselves of these "bands" and "cords" has been the effort on the part of the European dictators and their associates to destroy the influence of Christianity on their peoples.

"Yet" -- *in spite of all disbelief and conspiracy and confusion and opposition* -- "Yet," saith Jehovah, "I have set *My* king upon *My* holy hill of Zion." This is a prophetic statement of divine intention, not of previously accomplished fact. Not yet has the head of "this present evil world," Satan, been laid hold upon by the Apocalyptic Messenger and bound "with a great chain" for a thousand years. Not yet have his kings been bound with chains, and his nobles with fetters of iron, as it is declared they shall be. Not yet has his kingdom felt the "iron rod" of Jehovah's King, dashing it to pieces like a potter's vessel. Not yet has the King, so "set by Jehovah, assumed His throne and issued His own inaugural Proclamation: "I will tell of the decree: Jehovah said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee" (or, "brought Thee forth" - Young; or, "acknowledged Thy paternity," or "declared Thy pedigree" - Num. 1:18). "Ask of Me and I will give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.... " "Behold, I make all things new. It is accomplished! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." - Psalm 2; Rev. 21:5-8.

But -- "Who hath believed our message, and to whom hath the Arm of Jehovah been revealed?" "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth," said Jesus, "that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes." The world drowns on in darkness; it does not hear the Christmas Proclamation. But when the due time comes, there will

be no delay, no hesitation, no procrastination, no commutation of sentence upon an evil and rebellious world. "For a full end, and that determined, will the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, make in the midst of all the earth." (Isa. 10:23.) The sovereignty of this King whose birth on earth we celebrate, is to be autocratic; His dominion coextensive with the boundaries of earth.

Herein is an apparent inconsistency in the Proclamation of the herald angels, as reported in the Authorized Version of our Bible. It promised, without limitation, "Peace on earth, good will toward men." But the following nineteen hundred years have been years of warfare on earth; and the Kingdom of Christ, as foretold by all the Prophets, will be inaugurated, not by peaceful means, but by force, involving the destruction or restraint of His enemies. However, when the most ancient manuscripts of the Gospel are examined, the inconsistency disappears. All three of these MSS, the Sinaitic, the Vatican, and Alexandrine, show that the text originally read: "Peace on earth *to men of good will.* " The Peace is extended only to those who, like the King Himself, "love righteousness and hate iniquity." "Great peace have they who love Thy law." On the contrary, "*There is no peace, saith Jehovah, to the wicked.* " "Oh, that thou hadst hearkened unto My commandments! *then* had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." It would appear that the Apostle Paul had the Proclamation in mind when he wrote to the Romans: "God . . . will render to every man according to his works . . . unto them that . . . obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish . . . but glory and honor and peace to every man that worketh good." - Isaiah 48:18-24; Romans 2:1-11.

All this is not inconsistent with the prophecies that paint the peace and prosperity of Christ's reign. Inaugurated as it will be amid scenes of violence, all opposition will be quickly suppressed. Once the intent and adequacy of His authority becomes generally known, the reaction of the people of earth will be as foretold by the Prophet Isaiah: "It shall come to pass in that day that Jehovah will punish the host of the high ones on high [the evil spirits spoken of in Eph. 6:12] and the kings of the earth upon the earth. . . . For Jehovah of hosts will reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem. . . . And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him and He will save us: this is Jehovah; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." (Isa. 24:21, 23; 25:9.) St. Peter declared in his second recorded sermon (Acts 3:12-26) that the return of "the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus" will be to bring "seasons of refreshing" in fulfillment of the sworn covenant to Abraham: "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Of this reign of blessing, asserted the Apostle, all God's holy Prophets had spoken "since the world began."

The extension of a divine offer of peace, to the well-disposed individuals in a world in rebellion against God, two thousand years before the inauguration of His Kingdom in power and glory, has been a favor of the greatest importance to its beneficiaries. All are members of a fallen race, "born in sin and shapen in iniquity," unable from inherent weakness to serve God perfectly in the environment and atmosphere of "the present evil world," however good their desires and intentions. But through this divine offer, "Ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. For He is our peace," writes Paul to the Ephesians. (2:13, 17.) "He came and preached peace to you [Gentiles] that were far off, and peace to them [the Jews] that were nigh: for through Him we both have our access in one spirit unto the Father." "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have had access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." (Rom. 5:1, 2.) Thus, through the "peace to men of good will," proclaimed by the angels that first Christmas morning, has been made possible the great "High Calling of God in Christ Jesus." No wonder this offer of amnesty was prefaced by the chorus; "*Glory in the highest unto God,* " the Author of so beneficent a Plan.

So the ones who can still hear the Christmas Proclamation of the angels, *know* that despite all discord and opposition, all the folly of men and the malignancy of demons, "A *King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.* " (Jer. 23:5.) And they know that this King will be the resurrected Christ Jesus, who was once born as the Babe of Bethlehem. "Even so, come quickly Lord Jesus."

-H. E. Hollister

The Eternal Will

To war the armored nations march
With echoing tread and thud of drums;
But under heaven's triumphal arch
A King unseen in conquest comes.
A thousand wills are crossed in war,
A thousand victories lost and won.
They alter not His changeless law
One will is destined to be done.

Frail as the blossoms of the grass,
Earth's glories rise to fade away;
One foot alone shall never pass
From out the kingdom of the day.
Republic, state, dominion, throne,
Go down before the setting sun;
Time summons all save Him alone -
One will is destined to be done.

The victor and the vanquished soon
Alike lay down their arms in sleep;
For Honor brings the strong no boon
To stay the vigils death must keep.
Defeat or conquest, life or death,
Progressive still His courses run;
Moved not the measure of a breath --
One will is destined to be done.

To that one will Creation turns
Her myriad gaze in wonder dumb;
No flower that blows, no sun that burns,
His secret tells in light or bloom,
But righteous law at last shall prove
To Him was every battle won;
Creation's travail brought forth love --
One will is destined to be done.

- Ernest Warburton Shurtleff

Entered Into Rest

Mae Addison, England
Reona Bohley, St. Louis, Mo.
E. Leonard Chrimes, England
Edward E. Fay, Oakland, Cal.
Michael Fritz, Milwaukee, Wis.
William H. Giles, Richmond, Va.
John Godzala, Buffalo, N.Y.
Lulu H. Goodrich, Warren, Ohio
Adele Hurd, Lynn, Mass.
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