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SEVEN ITEMS FROM 2004
By Duane V. Maxey

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INTRODUCTION

The following 7 items were all published as HDM Emails during the year 2004. The first of them was written on New Year's Day when we were residing in Tucson, Arizona. However, the majority of the items were written and published after our return to Phoenix, where we yet reside on this day, August 16, 2004.

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01 -- NEW YEAR'S DAY 4002 B.C. -- ANOTHER EVIL INVENTION!

To begin this little article -- written on New Year's Day 2004, let's reverse the "2" and the "4" in the date and turn the clock backwards 5,998 years. Please bear with me, if you will, in this little, imaginary scenario, written as having been authored by someone on New Year's Day, 4002 B.C. Please do not take the remarks as actual, factual, or historic. In fact, the scenario is

written in a somewhat "tongue-in-cheek" manner, but please DO read between the lines to catch my serious thoughts in writing it.

* * *

Well, here are, January 1, 4002 B.C. -- another year has come. It has now been 4,002 years since the earth was formed -- and here we go again. Some wise-guy has trotted out a new invention -- something that he is calling a "wheel" of all things!

They tell me this invention is circular in shape, and the first thing you know, if we are not extremely careful, someone will get the crazy notion that the earth itself is round! -- and everyone with any good sense can see that it is flat, except for the mountains and valleys.

I predict that no good will come of this wicked invention, and I think we should gather a counsel together and make a rule out-lawing the use of this threatening novelty as a potential curse on all mankind!

For some years now, I have been convinced that the root-source of human woe is these new inventions they keep trotting out:-- the discovery of flint-rocks to start fires has made our young men lazy since they no longer have to work hard spinning the point of a stick into a wooden surface to start a fire! What is more, the invention of these flint-rocks gave somebody else the idea of using a sharp point that was broken off of one of them as the point on the end of his arrow.

It was bad enough that the bow and arrow had already been invented -- now this young punk invented flint-stone arrow-heads -- and just look at the evils that have resulted since these horrendous inventions hit the scene! -- men can now kill huge, wild game from great distances with deadly accuracy, carry that prey home, strike a flint, light a fire, and have a delicious, home-cooked meal within just a short amount of time! And all of this is contributing to the laziness of both our men and women! Furthermore, since the invention of flint-rock fire-ignition and flint-rock arrow heads there is more and more killing among men on earth -- all caused by these evil inventions!

After the invention of the flint-rock arrow-head, it wasn't long until some smart-aleck created a sharp, flint-stone ax-head, enabling him to cut down trees up to ten inches in diameter in less than a day! This, in turn, contributed to the indolence and injury of all mankind -- no longer was it necessary to build homes out of mud and clay bricks or out of stone -- wooden structures were built more rapidly and with less labor, giving lazy folks more time to lounge in their homes -- but, the curse of it all soon befell them! -- these new-fangled, wooden homes became fire-traps! -- when their indolent occupants are not very careful they catch fire from the cooking and heating fires and burn down, destroying both the structures and their dwellers!

I could list even more of these wicked inventions, but before I close I would like to predict a few more evils that are bound to come from the invention of the "wheel":

(1) Beyond getting the insane notion that the earth is round, some folks will begin to think that the earth also turns on an axle, like the "wheel" -- something that is totally insane, because if the earth turned like a wheel it would soon roll away from the sun and we would all perish in the cold!

(2) Then again, beyond believing that the earth is round, some folks might get the crazy idea that the earth is rolling in circles around the sun, when everyone knows that the sun makes circles around the earth -- from east to west every day.

(3) Also, while entertaining these other crazy notions, I predict that many egotistical individuals will begin to think that all things revolve around themselves! Why, the pompous young man who invented the "wheel" probably considers himself to be "a big wheel" -- with the whole world orbiting around him! Egocentricity is bound to develop even more rapidly now that his rotating disc has hit the scene! It will be the "Gates-way" through which immense pride will come into our world.

(4) But the damaging effect of this new thing called a "wheel" is bound to have more than an evil impact on men's thinking -- it will also hasten travel and increase the transporting of goods to villages 8 or 10 miles away! This will encourage laziness, love of ease, and the intermingling of our families with those of distant peoples who do not hold to our customs -- and everyone knows that OUR customs are the best on earth, absolutely perfect, and they will only be corrupted by contact with others in the world!

(5) The invention of the "wheel" will also encourage theft at night. Men will be able to put these things on an axle at the right and left sides of a box, put poles out from the box, hook an ox to the poles, and load up huge amounts of stolen articles from neighboring villages and sneak away 3 miles or more before anyone ever awakens!

I could go on and on about the evils that will come from this new invention, called the "wheel" -- and I could recite much more about the wicked influence of all other inventions that have been trotted out since the earth was formed 4,002 years ago today, but here I shall forbear with this concluding observation:-- THESE INVENTIONS ARE THE SOURCE OF ALL EVIL, AND UNLESS WE BEGIN OUTLAWING THE "WHEEL" IMMEDIATELY IT WILL ROLL MANKIND EVEN FURTHER INTO THE FILTHY QUAGMIRE AND QUICKSANDS OF DEBAUCHERY AND DEGRADATION, AS SURE AS THE WORLD IS FLAT!

* * *

And now for a few serious and genuine observations:-- Ecclesiastes 7:29 tells us that ".. God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."

(1) While one might mistake this verse to mean the opposite, the fact is: -- IT IS NOT INVENTIONS THAT HAVE MADE MAN EVIL; IT IS, RATHER, THE EVIL NATURE IN MAN THAT CAUSES HIM TO USE INVENTIONS IN AN EVIL WAY. The NIV translation of this verse reads: -- ".. God made mankind upright, but men have gone in search of many schemes." Since the Fall of Adam and Eve, people have "schemed" -- part of this scheming

bringing forth devices that are perfectly good inventions, but much of this scheming devising the wrong use of those inventions. Nevertheless -- while it is true that there have been, and are, some inventions which are in themselves evil -- **THE ROOT SOURCE OF SIN IS MAN'S EVIL HEART, AND THE WICKEDNESS IN THIS WORLD IS NOT PRIMARILY THE RESULT OF MAN'S INVENTIVE, GOD-GIVEN MIND!**

Furthermore, God knew that "Good and Useful Inventions" would be necessary. When God told Man in Genesis 1:28 to "have dominion over.. every living thing that moveth upon the earth," He knew that, after the Fall, Man would need to invent tools and weapons in order to "have dominion over" huge behemoths and ferocious beasts which were much stronger than Man and very able to slay him without those good and necessary inventions. Man's dominion over all earthly creatures was passed on to Noah after the flood, and it is through the invention and implementation of tools and weapons that God's prophecy of Genesis 9:2 is fulfilled: "the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth."

(2) Of course, the source of all evil was, first of all, Satan -- and then secondly Satan's nature implanted in Adam and Eve. With this in mind, please note: -- Romans 5:12 tells us that "BY ONE MAN sin entered into the world," NOT: -- "BY ONE (OR MANY) INVENTIONS SIN ENTERED INTO THE WORLD"!

(3) Further, according to Romans 5:15, SALVATION "IS BY ONE MAN, JESUS CHRIST," AND NOT BY MANY RULES! If Man's Salvation and Preservation from sin came by the Law, "what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?" (Hebrews 7:11). Under the Aaronic Priesthood, the Divine requirements were graven upon tables of stone that could be shattered and crumbled and written with ink upon parchments subject to decay and disintegration -- and, multitudinous as these Commandments and Laws were, they were powerless to save Man from the real source of sin -- his sinful heart. Under Christ's Priesthood, God's Law is "written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart." (2 Corinthians 3:3). And -- that inwardly written Law has power to keep any man, and every man, woman, boy or girl from sinning while using modern inventions in their daily lives and in their labors for Christ.

(4) **THE ONLY SOLUTION FOR THE EVIL USE OF THE PROLIFERATING INVENTIONS OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY IS OLD-FASHIONED, FULL SALVATION WHICH CLEANSSES AND FILLS MAN'S HEART WITH CHRIST'S SPIRIT.** Jesus declared in John 14:30: ".. the prince of this world.. hath nothing in me." Jesus never sinned in the use of any of the inventions that He employed as a Carpenter, nor with any other invention He used during His earthly life. Why? Not because He was being kept from sin by the written Law, but because His Father's Law was written in His heart of hearts! There was nothing within Him that would cause Him to sinfully abuse any invention He employed! And it is that same, inward, holy Law that keeps the sanctified from using modern inventions sinfully.

We can see from 2 Corinthians 3:6 that Christ's ministers should, and must, be "able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the

Spirit giveth life." Why is it then, that some of today's most zealous preachers of heart holiness are relying more and more upon written rules to keep their followers from sin? Will some of today's Conservative Holiness Church leaders EVER learn that they must primarily focus upon leading their flocks into that experience which writes God's Law in the hearts of their people? -- and that the antidote for the sinful use of modern technology is NOT more and more rules and the increasingly rigid enforcement of the same? If they ever grasp these facts, "when shall it once be?" (Jeremiah 13:27). Would not the year 2004 be A MUCH HAPPIER (AND EVEN HOLIER) NEW YEAR for many in the Church if it became the year when these facts were both learned and applied by God's Spirit to their hearts?

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Duane V. Maxey,
Tucson, Arizona,
January 1, 2004

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02 -- MANY BREAK-AWAY NOW A DAYS

"And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? THERE BE MANY SERVANTS NOW A DAYS THAT BREAK AWAY every man from his master" (1 Sam. 25:10).

Surely Satan is now doing his fiendish utmost to "scatter the power of the holy people" as Daniel prophesied centuries ago in Daniel 12:7 And, this battering, shattering, and scattering, when accomplished to its utmost, shall usher in the hour when "all these things" prophesied relative to end times and Christ's Return "shall be finished."

At a time when "the holy people" should be unified and strengthened, they are being divided and weakened, and at a time when holding together in the unity of the Spirit is so vital MANY ARE BREAKING AWAY.

But, WHILE AT FIRST BLUSH IT MAY APPEAR THAT THOSE WHO ARE BREAKING AWAY ARE THE PROBLEM, OFTEN THIS IS NOT THE CASE. Consider the case with David in the above text.

Nabal accused David of being just one more of the many mavericks who were then "breaking away" from their rightful masters -- but -- IT WAS AN UNJUST ACCUSATION IN SEVERAL RESPECTS.

(1) DAVID, IN FACT, WAS DRIVEN AWAY! -- In spite of his tarrying perhaps longer than he should have -- in deference to the advice and wishes of Jonathan -- IT BECAME CLEAR THAT HIS VERY SURVIVAL DEPENDED UPON HIS BREAKING AWAY FROM SAUL AND HIS REGIME!

And, I declare that this is exactly what is now taking place all too often in the Holiness Movement. Folks are being compelled to flee out of the midst of some Conservative Holiness denominations in order to survive spiritually! And, I have seen it to be the case where some, like Jonathan, have pled with those whom they love to "stay with the Church" and that if they do, all shall be well, only to discover also, like Jonathan, that their counsel was wrong -- and it that it is best for some of their closest and most beloved brethren to flee, and flee quickly, from a zealous and jealous leadership that has begun to cast javelins and purpose their ecclesiastical destruction if possible. Things have gotten to the point where Jonathans have had to warn those who had become targets to get out while they could!

What am I saying here? -- Simply this: While indeed there are "many now a days that break away" from that group with which they have been united for years, all too often the real cause and blame for that "breaking away" does not lie with those who break away, but rather with those who drove them into that necessary departure.

(2) DAVID BROKE AWAY WHEN HIS SERVICE WAS NO LONGER DESIRED NOR POSSIBLE. -- Consider all that David had done to help Saul -- his defeat of Goliath who threatened Saul's kingdom and throne; his constant effort to soothe and comfort the troubled man; and all else that David did to fit in willingly, sacrificially, bravely, helpfully, and humbly, into Saul's household. The time came, and that all too soon, that Saul in his jealousy lost all real appreciation for David's great service to him. Then it was that this proud tyrant considered even his own son an enemy for being a friend to David:

"Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion... For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die" (1 Sam. 20:30-31).

Just like Saul planned to hold leadership until he died and then to pass it on (an act of Nepotism) to Jonathan, even so some leaders have been known to plan the like in regard to the reigns of power in the denomination they now head. Despotism and Nepotism often go hand in hand in ecclesiastical realms -- as well as in secular domains.

And, where they WANT you OUT, you can really no longer serve -- as anything more than a target for javelins which, though spiritual, can sometimes be more deadly than the wound of bayonet. David served Saul as long as he could, just as some have lovingly, kindly, and sacrificially served their denominations -- until their service was no longer desired, and made impossible to be rendered.

(3) DAVID WAS, FIRST AND FOREMOST, THE SERVANT OF GOD -- NOT THE SERVANT OF SAUL.

Nabal's accusation was that David had broken away from his rightful master, Saul: "There be many servants now a days that break away every man from his MASTER." In fact, however, Saul was not David's real master. David's first obligation and allegiance belonged to

God, not to the unworthy man who was then king. Saul had become a tyrannical master, and we have every reason to suspect that Nabal was the same type of master as was Saul -- overbearing, jealous of power, critical, impossible to please, given to fits of anger, and stingy with both his purse and his praise.

General leaders, district leaders, and pastors must not act as "Lords over God's Heritage" (1 Pet. 5:3). Jesus told his first 12 apostles: "Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ" (Matt. 23:10). And James warned: "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation" (Jas. 3:1).

Leaders are warned against behaving like Masters, and followers are cautioned in 1 Corinthians 7:23 -- "Ye are bought with a price; BE NOT YE THE SERVANTS OF MEN."

There is nothing more sickening to behold than a fawning, sycophantic, boot-licking, apple-polishing, place-seeking "servant of men" -- one who will continually kow-tow to unprincipled leadership, either to avoid criticism, or to climb a step higher up the stairway of ambition in hopes of becoming himself, or herself, "king of the hill" some day! And such conduct is particularly nauseating when it is seen in an ecclesiastical chain of command.

Yes, "there be many servants" of the Lord in denominations "now a days that break away," from those groups. But, while it is tragic that the power of the holy people is being scattered when this occurs, IT DOES NOT ALWAYS FOLLOW THAT THE BLAME FOR THAT SCATTERING LIES AT THE DOORSTEP OF THOSE WHO LEAVE. Sometimes, like David in his faithful service to THE MASTER, they are driven to it by those who would "be many masters" -- yea, those who shall themselves "receive the greater condemnation" (Jas. 3:1) for behaving as "Lords over God's Heritage" and thereby scattering the sheep of His fold.

"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3) is, first and foremost, the duty of those whom God has placed over His people. No church leader should not make himself, his notions, and his demands, the primary cause of dividing the flock and thereby diminishing their power.

Wise, old king Solomon preached at least two messages in the following verses that neither his father's predecessor, Saul, nor his own son, Rehoboam, acted upon correctly:

Proverbs 20:8 -- "A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes."

Proverbs 20:26 -- "A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them."

Both Saul and Rehoboam scattered away the good instead of the evil, and "brought the wheel," as it were, over the righteous instead of over the wicked. Thus, the blame for the breaking away from them lay at their own doorstep, and not with those who left them. Even so, all too often this is the case when grieved servants are breaking away from Conservative Holiness Churches nowadays. Selah.

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03 -- WORSE AND WORSE -- VERSUS -- MORE AND MORE

2 Tim. 3:13 But evil men and seducers shall wax WORSE AND WORSE, deceiving, and being deceived.

Prov. 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth MORE AND MORE unto the perfect day.

* * *

A GREAT CONTEST is taking place in our world with Satan, "evil men and seducers" pitted against Christ and "the just" who walk in "the path" toward heaven.

A GREAT CONTRAST between the former and the latter can be seen in the above verses:--

THE WORLD, deceived by Satan, GROWS WORSE AND WORSE, while

THE PATH OF THE JUST, illumined by Christ, SHINES MORE AND MORE.

* * *

(1) In spite of the best efforts of good and godly men, THE WORLD GROWS WORSE AND WORSE. Isaiah 1:5-6 quite aptly describes this condition with the words: "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment."

We live in an evil-choosing, drunken-boozing, sickly-oozing, ever-losing world -- and it is not, will not, yea cannot, get better. It will get worse and worse, for it is sick unto death.

A glance at the situation in our own nation, and a whiff of the putrefaction, in it is enough to make one puke. A terminal, spiritual, moral, and political illness is all too apparent. To use some altered words of Lincoln: "We are now engaged in a great moral war, testing on the political scales whether this nation, or any nation, so conceived and so dedicated by our forefathers can long endure." If Time marches on much longer, I doubt that America, as it is now constituted, will endure.

Do I hear some say, "You're being awfully pessimistic!" Take it as you will, I assert that I am simply being more realistic than many wishful thinkers care to be.

Struck at our heart on September 11, 2001, American blood continues to flow in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. Invaded from the south, countless thousands of Hispanics continue to flood into, saturate, and divide our nation.

Did you know that there are two-legged coyotes? -- down here near the border, that's what they call the Mexican Alien-Smugglers who are constantly bringing huge numbers of illegals across the border into Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas, and then spiriting them away from south to north and from west to east throughout the land.

Yes, it is true that many of these illegals do seek a better life, that they do pay dearly (sometimes even with their lives) in the effort to get into the USA. And, yes, it is true that many of them are hard-working harvesters, janitors, fast food employees, and those who are being paid less than most US Citizens would accept. But still -- they are here illegally, and **THEY ARE NOT ASSIMILATING INTO OUR SOCIETY.**

Over a Phoenix radio station about a week ago, I heard **AN HISPANIC ACTIVIST THREATEN THOSE SEEKING OFFICE IN OUR NOVEMBER ELECTIONS**, with words quite identical to the following: "It will take more than speaking a little Spanish to get the Hispanic vote in the next election." These words were an overt warning: -- "**DON'T ALIENATE THE ALIENS IF YOU WANT TO BE ELECTED IN NOVEMBER!**"

Furthermore, these words seemed to be directed more particularly to President Bush, who can speak a little Spanish. Whatever the case, John Kerry "got on his horse" and hurried down here to meet with the Hispanic group to which this threatening activist belonged.

Who in his right mind would vote for a man who will neither take the battle to our foes abroad nor oppose the saturation of our nation by millions who will not assimilate into our society and who may soon vote for the division of our nation and the secession of our southern states? Answer: -- Millions will, when they vote for Kerry in November.

On the other hand, who in his right mind would want a President re-elected who does not and will not protect our southern borders. And, what Christian, in the name of decency, would want a vice-President re-elected who uses vile words like that voiced by Dick Cheney on the floor of the US Senate a few days ago?! Yes, Cheney was apparently attacked rather unmercifully by the Democratic Senator at whom he flung that vile vociferation -- but -- no matter how wise may be his advice and deeds otherwise, **I THINK WE MIGHT BE BETTER OFF WITH A MAN SERVING AS VICE PRESIDENT WHO WILL AT LEAST REFRAIN FROM SUCH FILTHY WORDS IN PUBLIC!** When later asked about this sewer language, Mr. Cheney said that he "felt better" after saying it, and he was not the least bit remorseful or apologetic for that vile utterance. **SHAME ON HIM!!!**

Many Conservatives who want to see our nation go the right way both morally and politically are now in a "Catch 22" position -- a lose, lose situation politically: -- They cannot conscientiously vote for Kerry, while they feel compelled to vote for Bush-Cheney, even though in so doing they help put back into office a President who turns a blind eye toward the humongous threat to our national integrity posed by the flood of illegals across our southern

borders and even though voting thus puts back into office a vice-President who uses gutter language in public.

I was a lad 8 years old when World War II ended. I remember going out into the street as the town siren loudly blew and people in my little home town celebrated the end of that bloody conflict. I have lived during the administrations of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman*, Dwight David Eisenhower, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Lyndon Baines Johnson, Richard Milhous Nixon, Gerald Rudolph Ford, James Earl Carter, Ronald Wilson Reagan, George Herbert Walker Bush, William Jefferson Clinton, and now during the first term of George Walker Bush.

[*Harry S. Truman didn't have a middle name. The "S" stood for a compromise between the names of his two grandfathers -- Anderson Shipp Truman and Solomon Young.]

No, unlike perhaps a few of my readers, I was not alive during the administration of Herbert Clark Hoover -- but, I have seen amazing changes in our nation during the 67 plus years I have lived under FDR to Bush II -- most of those changes falling into the category of "worse and worse" -- spiritually, morally, and politically.

During my boyhood, Divorce was frowned upon by society as a whole and Marriage was considered to be the only legitimate union between a man and woman -- and only the sacred union of a man and a woman, Abortionists were jailed, girls were considered "ruined" who had children out of wedlock, Virtue was praised, Decency was honored, at least public Vulgarity was shunned, Homosexuals were ousted from office and sent to the penitentiary, both Rapists and Murderers were executed while Robbers and Thugs were given long sentences behind bars.

When I was a teenager in High School, our female classmates, including those who made no profession of religion, wore skirts well below the knees and women could still blush if even their slip showed. When I was a lad, God was at least revered in Name, and "under God" was placed into the Pledge of Allegiance (When I first learned it in Grade School "under God" was not in the Pledge). When I was a lad Socialism and Communism were both anathema to millions of Americans and Patriotism was heralded by the masses.

Then came the moral corruption of Hollywood -- in Technicolor and 3-D, and when I was about 11 years old the Boob-Tube came to my little home-town of Payette, Idaho. By the time I was out of High School in 1955 the stage was set for the advent of Elvis Presley in 1956. Later came the world-wide infestation of "The Beetles" -- and in 1960 hem-lines crept up over the knees when Jack and Jacqueline Kennedy entered the Whitehouse. That year marked one of the greatest turning points in American History relative to morals -- which began a steep plunge toward the edge of the abyss upon which our nation now hangs.

Yes, during my 67 plus years, I have seen things get "worse and worse" spiritually, morally, and politically -- until today our nation hangs merely by a few threads on the brim of its plunge into that abyss from which it shall never arise. Oh, it may go on for some time -- but not like it was, and not even as it now is! Things are gonna get a lot worse, before they get better in our world -- and that, sooner than millions may imagine!

It's gonna get "worse and worse" for true Christians. St. Paul wrote in Second Timothy 3:12-15 "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax WORSE AND WORSE, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

The writer of Proverbs 4:14-18 declared: "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall. For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence. But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth MORE AND MORE unto the perfect day." And that brings me to the second part of this little article.

(2) In spite of the worst and most fiendish efforts of Satan and ungodly men, THE PATH OF THE JUST SHINETH "MORE AND MORE" TODAY!

The darker the Night, the brighter the Light shines! Ever notice that? Put a powerful beacon on the highest hill in your area and zap up its beam to the greatest amperage and radiance possible, and it will not appear nearly as bright at high-noon as it will in the pitch black of midnight.

The tragedy is not that the Light cannot best be seen today. This is the day in which it can best be seen when it is allowed to shine. The tragedy is that at a time when it could best be seen, it is most hidden! Those who should be "Beamers of the Light" are instead bent upon being "Keepers of the Light"!

A few years ago, a saying emanated from somewhere -- I know not from whence, perhaps from the producers and/or purveyors and drinkers of hard liquor: "Beam me up, Scotty"! The world is determined to beam its own deceptive light upon the world as never before, but since the light that is in wordlings is darkness, HOW GREAT IS THAT DARKNESS!

Conversely, at the time when Christ's Light will shine "more and more" too many in the Church are determined to "Keep That Light" -- even if it means "Hiding it under a bushel" to do so!

There is, however, a "bright side" to the fact that Christ's Light is now shining "more and more". Part of that "bright side" is that as we approach the Perfect Day with pitch darkness all around, "more and more" Divine Light is being shed by the Holy Spirit upon Bible Truths. Some of the most vital verities in the Book are now unfolding as never before! No, not to highminded theologues and pompous pulpiteers, but -- to the saints of God.

One part of Scriptural Truth that is opening up with the increased revelations of Divine Light is that pertaining to the Second Coming of Christ -- including all that shall precede and all that shall accompany and follow that eternally climactic Event. The apostle Peter wrote in 2

Peter 1:19 "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."

The fact that Christ shall unfold "more and more" to His saints about end time events the closer that time approaches can also be seen in the book of Daniel. In Daniel 12:8-10 we read:

"And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and SEALED TILL THE TIME OF THE END. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but THE WISE SHALL UNDERSTAND.

That which has been "closed up and sealed till the end" is beginning to "open up" more and more the closer we get to the Ultimate Apokalupsis (Apocalypse).

Oh yes, I know that the secrets of Second Coming Prophecy have been misinterpreted by many -- for many centuries. I do not deny that. I simply assert that THE TRUE INTERPRETATION OF THOSE PROPHECIES IS BECOMING MORE AND MORE CLEAR THE NEARER WE COME TO "THE END"!

God said it would happen, and it is occurring! Saint of God, approach the reading of Eschatological Scriptures today with a pure heart, an open mind, and a willingness to let the Spirit of God instruct you, and you are more likely to see more things more clearly than those in any preceding generation! I do not speak of fanciful and mystical interpretations that will inflate one's carnal pride, but rather, of factual and unveiled revelations which will alert your soul and help you, and others, to be better prepared for what lies ahead.

I assert that when God revealed in Daniel 12:3 that "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament" it was partly because "even to the time of the end.. knowledge shall be increased" (Dan. 12:4). Along with the great increase of secular knowledge near the End Time is also coming a Divinely "increased spiritual and Biblical knowledge"!

Prophetic "words.. closed up and SEALED TILL THE TIME OF THE END" are even now being increasingly opened, as "the path of the just.. shineth MORE AND MORE unto the Perfect Day."

No, I do not advocate making the study of Second Coming Prophecy the first priority to students of the Bible. It must always take a back-seat to the more essential doctrines pertaining to the plan of Salvation. However, the closer the world comes to the End Time, the more important becomes the correct interpretation of Bible Prophecy relative to the Second Coming of Christ. No doubt THAT IS WHY long-sealed and hidden eschatological truths are beginning to unfold -- as never before. It is part of God's aid and assistance to His saints in the Last Days -- part of that which is designed to help them endure unto the End and be ready when the Last Trump sounds.

"But if any man be [willingly] ignorant" of this, "let him be ignorant" (1 Cor. 14:38). He will be so at his own loss. Again, Peter said concerning the "sure word of prophecy": -- "Ye do well that ye take heed" unto it "as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."

And how much more important is that injunction as the world grows "worse and worse," as time speeds faster and faster toward its eternal conclusion, and as the Spirit of God shines "more and more" Light upon His Sure Word! Selah.

As a part of your study of this subject, I invite you to read hdm0124, "His Appearing and His Kingdom," and I challenge you to emulate the Bereans who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). You will find the digital edition of this book on all of the HDM publications discs under my name.

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04 -- GRACE TO KNOCK YOU DOWN?

(Cartwright -- McAuley -- Wireman -- An Exceptional Trio)

2 Tim. 2:24 -- "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men.."

The above scripture must serve as the Divine Standard, and surely with few exceptions the servant of the Lord must act and react in violent situations with a docile, lamb-like behavior and conduct. Some of the most moving and powerful influences for Christ have been occasions when Christians have exhibited the love of God when being mistreated, brutalized, and even martyred. Nevertheless, strange as it may seem, there have apparently been some occasions in Church History when God has either condoned, or overlooked a bit of violent behavior on the part of one of his purely motivated and zealous servants.

Elbert Dodd, now sainted former Gen. Moderator of the BMC, was one who apparently believed that there ARE some legitimate times when a Christian can physically defend against evil-doers -- perhaps, for example, in defense of a woman, or in defense of another who is being brutalized. As I recall, I heard him say, at least once (with good humor) when commenting on the subject from the pulpit: "AMAZING GRACE HOW SWEET THE SOUND, THAT GAVE ME GRACE TO KNOCK YOU DOWN!"

Perhaps another time when Bro. Dodd felt that physical force might be justified was when evil-doers were trying to break-up a religious meeting. Such was the case in all three examples that I shall present below, involving three unique, and exceptional servants of the Lord: -- Peter Cartwright, Jerry McAuley, and Charles Little (Bull-Dog Charlie) Wireman.

Why is it that we can read stories such as those below and inwardly applaud and say to ourselves: "HOORAY FOR THAT SERVANT OF THE LORD WHO HAD GRACE TO KNOCK DOWN THE BULLYING BRUTE(S)!"? I wonder if sometimes God DOES

occasionally allow one of His servants to "knock some sense into the head" of a trouble-making brute just to make onlooking evil-doers "sit up and take notice?"

I'm not sure of that, but I am sure of this: -- No Christian should engage in such violence unless he (or she) is sure that God is in it! In the first case cited below, it is very apparent that some of the preachers who engaged in the violence with Peter Cartwright against a gang of ruffians felt inwardly condemned after doing so. Probably in nearly every case, God is more pleased when Christians, under assault, "take wrong" (1 Cor. 6:7) and when they follow the admonition of 2 Tim. 2:24 above -- both of these verses being in harmony with Jesus' command in Matt. 5:39 -- "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."

How many unique examples of violent Christian behavior preceded that of early M. E. itinerant, Peter Cartwright, I know not. However, he strikes me as somewhat of a forerunner to Jerry McAuley, with the latter being the same to Bull-Dog Charlie Wireman. They were "An Exceptional Trio."

Now, if you read the violent examples in the three excerpts below and ENJOY THEM, be sure not to EMPLOY THEM unless you are very, very sure that God is in it. Don't be ambitious or anxious to emulate Cartwright, McAuley, and Wireman. One of the best pieces of advice regarding these incidents is found in and under the title, "OTHERS MAY, YOU MAY NOT."

* * *

PETER CARTWRIGHT

From HDM1557

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF PETER CARTWRIGHT

The Backwoods Preacher

Edited By W. P. Strickland

Our last quarterly meeting was a camp meeting. We had a great many tents, and a large turn-out for a new country, and, perhaps, there never was a greater collection of rabble and rowdies. They came drunk, and armed with dirks, clubs, knives, and horsewhips, and swore they would break up the meeting. After interrupting us very much on Saturday night, they collected early on Sunday morning, determined on a general riot. At eight o'clock I was appointed to preach. About the time I was half through my discourse, two very fine-dressed young men marched into the congregation with loaded whips, and hats on, and rose up and stood in the midst of the ladies, and began to laugh and talk. They were near the stand, and I requested them to desist and get off the seats; but they cursed me, and told me to mind my own business, and said they would not get down.

I stopped trying to preach, and called for a magistrate. There were two at hand, but I saw they were both afraid. I ordered them to take these men into custody, but they said they could not do it. I told them, as I left the stand, to command him to take them, and I would do it at the risk of my life. I advanced toward them. They ordered me to stand off, but I advanced. One of them

made a pass at my head with his whip, but I closed in with him, and jerked him off the seat. A regular scuffle ensued. The congregation by this time were all in commotion. I heard the magistrates give general orders, commanding all friends of order to aid in suppressing the riot.

In the scuffle I threw my prisoner down, and hold him fast; he tried his best to get loose; I told him to be quiet, or I would pound his chest well. The mob rose, and rushed to the rescue of the two prisoners, for they had taken the other young man also. An old and drunken magistrate came up to me, and ordered me to let my prisoner go. I told him I should not. He swore if I did not he would knock me down. I told him to crack away. Then one of my friends, at my request, took hold of my prisoner, and the drunken justice made a pass at me; but I parried the stroke, and seized him by the collar and the hair of the head, and fetching him a sudden jerk forward, brought him to the ground, and jumped on him. I told him to be quiet, or I would pound him well.

The mob then rushed to the scene; they knocked down seven magistrates, and several preachers and others. I gave up my drunken prisoner to another, and threw myself in front of the friends of order. Just at this moment the ringleader of the mob and I met; he made three passes at me, intending to knock me down. The last time he struck at me, by the force of his own effort he threw the side of his face toward me. It seemed at that moment I had not power to resist temptation, and I struck a sudden blow in the burr of the ear and dropped him to the earth. Just at that moment the friends of order rushed by hundreds on the mob, knocking them down in every direction.

In a few minutes the place became too strait for the mob, and they wheeled and fled in every direction; but we secured about thirty prisoners, marched them off to a vacant tent, and put them under guard till Monday morning, when they were tried, and every man was fined to the utmost limits of the law. The aggregate amount of fines and costs was near three hundred dollars. They fined my old drunken magistrate twenty dollars, and returned him to court, and he was cashiered of his office.

On Sunday, when we had vanquished the mob, the whole encampment was filled with mourning; and although there was no attempt to resume preaching till evening, yet such was our confused state, that there was not then a single preacher on the ground willing to preach, from the presiding elder, John Sale, down. Seeing we had fallen on evil times, my spirit was stirred within me. I said to the elder, "I feel a clear conscience, for under the necessity of the circumstances we have done right, and now I ask to let me preach."

"Do" said the elder, "for there is no other man on the ground can do it."

The encampment was lighted up, the trumpet blown; I rose in the stand, and required every soul to leave the tents and come into the congregation. There was a general rush to the stand. I requested the brethren, if ever they prayed in all their lives, to pray now. My voice was strong and clear, and my preaching was more of an exhortation and encouragement than any thing else. My text was, "The gates of hell shall not prevail." in about thirty minutes the power of God fell on the congregation in such a manner as is seldom seen; the people fell in every direction, right and left, front and rear. It was supposed that not less than three hundred fell like

dead men in mighty battle; and there was no need of calling mourners, for they were strewed all over the camp-ground; loud wailings went up to heaven from sinners for mercy, and a general shout from Christians, so that the noise was heard afar off. Our meeting lasted all night, and Monday and Monday night; and when we closed on Tuesday, there were two hundred who had professed religion, and about that number joined the Church.

* * *

JERRY MCAULEY

From HDM2379

JERRY MCAULEY, AN APOSTLE TO THE LOST

"Come,' I answered quietly, 'you must go out, or I'll put you out.'

"He looked at me a moment, but made no move to do as I told him. I then reached out and caught him by the collar, when he coolly threw his arms over the back of the seat, locking his hands together with a grip like a vise, and said, with a grin, 'Go ahead, old fellow.' I suppose he thought I could not lift him. I ran my hand down to get a good hold of his shirt-collar, and surging back, I brought him to his feet, bench and all. I dragged him out into the aisle, but he clung to the long bench till one end of it suddenly struck the ceiling and that broke his hold. I grabbed him by the throat now, as he struck at me square from the shoulder and tried to hit me between the eyes; but he soon found out that I had not forgotten all I knew of the 'manly art' when I stopped his blows cleverly, and in return gave him another shove nearer the door, tightening my grip on his throat all the time.

"He kept hitting at me like a madman, but failed every time to get a blow home on me, while in the meantime we were getting nearer and nearer the door. When not striking at me he would clutch at anything and everything -- the benches, the heads of those near him, whatever he could get hold of -- trying to stop his progress.

"I felt the God of battles was my helper, and I was bound to win. It was like a battle between the kingdoms of good and evil. By the time we got to the door we were in such a fearful struggle that when we struck the doors -- about two inches thick, and built of hard wood -- we carried them clear off the hinges, and split one door all up. By this time he was black in the face from my grip on his throat, and he gasped, 'Let go! l-e-t, g-o! I'll be-have; l-e-t, g-o, J-e-r-J-e-r-r-y.'

"Ah,' I said, as I gave him one more squeeze and a tighter one, and shoved him off. 'Ah! ah! you great old coward, you're no man after all!' He begged hard, and I let him go. When we got out on the sidewalk where I had dragged him, I found it had been a put-up job; for across the street stood a lot of his chums shouting, 'Give it to him, Jackson. Give ould Hallelujah Jerry fits;' but they did not try to help him. 'He won't give it to him, nor you either,' I replied.

"As soon as Jackson caught his breath he ran across the street where there was a new building, and he and some of the rest picked up bricks and prepared to brick-bat me. I didn't give

them time, but walking coolly over to them I said, 'Ah, you cowards, drop those bricks -- drop them!' and they did, and ran for their lives. I then saw two policemen standing looking on and laughing at them.

"I then returned to the Mission, and joined in singing 'Rock of Ages, cleft for me,' which they had been singing all through the row. Things went on about as usual after this, but the would-be disturbers were a little more careful for fear of meeting with a similar defeat, for this man Jackson was one of the worst men in that worst of streets.

* * *

BULL-DOG CHARLIE WIREMAN

From HDM0481

BULLDOG CHARLIE AND THE DEVIL

By Charles Little Wireman

On the Saturday night it was my time to preach and there had been quite an increase in attendance. Service was about over and I was ready to give an altar call when this bully came in, took a seat on the end of the bench in the rear next to the open door. There were two steps from the sidewalk into the mission hall. This fellow began to talk loudly. The people recognized him and an uneasy feeling came over them.

I said, "Will everyone please give me their attention." He spoke, "I am talking to this boy by my side about his sick dad." I called upon a man to pray. I went down the aisle and said to the bully, "You will have to behave or get out." He said to me, "You don't know who you are talking to, do you?" I replied, "I have your number. You are the fellow who threw the preacher in the canal, and bumped the other mens' heads together and broke up the meeting. I am neither of these men and if I didn't know you, it wouldn't take us long to get acquainted. Now, behave yourself."

He said, "O.K." I turned to go back up the aisle and he called me a vile name and swore at me. I whirled around, grabbed him by the shoulder, jerked him up, intending to shove him out the door. I saw he had a pistol in a holster. In the meantime, men got to their feet and were standing by me. He jerked loose from me and struck at me and I ducked. In striking over my shoulder he hit a poor man in the eye and blacked it.

He stood between me and the open door. I raised up and took him on the chin with an upper cut and he landed on the sidewalk and I fell upon him. He put his hand on the pistol, but I grabbed his wrist and with the other hand took his throat and told him to let the pistol loose. He refused and I loosed his throat and grabbed him by his heavy hair, jerked his head up, shoving it hard against a curbstone and he was out. I pulled his big, long pistol from the holster and by now a crowd had gathered.

Doubtless some of the people did not know what had happened and thought he had been killed as they saw me with his pistol. He looked like a dead man. I said, "This man may be hurt

badly. Some of his friends carry him somewhere and call a doctor." I also asked all who would to come back into the mission. I took the pistol and placed it on the pulpit.

In the meantime people were milling around trying to see the preacher who had whipped the bully. I said to the bad men, "You see what happened to your leader. We are running this meeting, not you. If you gang members were three feet between the eyes and had horns on your head eighteen inches long, you would look like a bunch of midgets to this preacher. God gave a great revival and a good church was established which is still going for His glory.

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05 -- A GREAT MAN IS FALLEN -- A FAR GREATER IS RISEN!

"Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day..?" (2 Sam. 3:38).

"HE is not here: for HE IS RISEN, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matt. 28:6).

With the passing of former President Ronald Reagan, Saturday Afternoon, June 5, 2004, many are mourning that departure with the sentiments of 2 Samuel 3:38:-- viz., that "a great man is fallen." The radio air-waves are filled with the plaudits of numerous, Conservative Republicans who are praising his accomplishments as this nation's 40th President. Repeatedly, his dramatic and historic command to Mikhail Gorbachev concerning the wall that was dividing East from West Germany is being replayed: -- "Mr. Gorbachev, TEAR DOWN THIS WALL!" And, while Ronald Reagan is being thus honored by Conservative Republicans, even many of his past political opponents are acknowledging his greatness.

His passing IS a quite moving occasion for our nation, and it is fitting to give him credit for being a leader who believed that God has a rightful and essential place in the fiber and existence of America. Further, even though his progress toward national prominence emanated from Hollywood, he seemed -- in his later years, as Governor of California and as President of our nation, to be a decent man -- quite different in his moral behavior from one William Jefferson Clinton whose later debaucheries have now forever "blackened" the sanctity of our "Whitehouse" and greatly diminished the dignity of the U.S. Presidency.

I have little doubt myself, that our nation would be better than it is today if someone more like Ronald Reagan had inhabited "The Oval Office" during the 8 years that we had an immoral Playboy there. But, even more sad than the passing from the national scene of those with a degree of decency, is the arrival among adult, American voters of millions who not only wink at immorality, but who continue to make political "stars" out of W. J. Clinton and his wife Hillary!

Some feel that God has raised up George W. Bush to carry on what was begun by President Ronald Wilson Reagan, continued by President George Herbert Walker Bush, and interrupted by the ugly hiatus of the Clinton years.

Perhaps there is some truth in this. But, ALL SHOULD REMEMBER -- AT THE TIME OF RONALD REAGAN'S "FALLING" INTO DEATH -- THAT THE HOPE OF AMERICA, AND THE DESTINY OF THE WORLD, DOES NOT REST IN THE "RISING" UP OF A POLITICAL SUCCESSOR TO OUR 40TH PRESIDENT -- It rests, rather, with ONE WHO FOR NEARLY 2,000 YEARS HAS BEEN "RISEN" FROM THE DEAD -- JESUS CHRIST, THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS!

Romans 13:7 commands Christians to "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour." At a time when IT IS A SHAME TO HONOR SOME, it does seem to me that it is proper and right to honor the memory of Ronald Wilson Reagan as a man who dignified with some real decency the office bestowed upon him as our 40th President, and as a leader whose wisdom did help bring about the demise of the U.S.S.R.

I do hope (and pray) that our Oval Office will be kept from John Kerry, one that I fear will emulate all too closely the shameful conduct and harmful policies of "W. J. C." But the real hope for this vain, profane, and insane world DOES involve another "W. J. C." -- that glorious day W-HEN J-ESUS C-OMES. Though blacker midnights will likely occur before the blazing splendor of that supernal dawn, "What A Day, Glorious Day, That Will Be!" for those ready and "waiting for the Consolation of Israel" (Luke 2:25).

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06 -- TRUST JESUS -- DON'T TRUST POLITICAL PRINCES!

"It is better to TRUST IN THE LORD than to put confidence in princes" (Psa. 118:9).

"PUT NOT YOUR TRUST IN PRINCES, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help" (Psa. 146:3).

Regrettably, there seems to be -- even among Conservative Holiness People -- a certain tendency to put altogether too much confidence in one elected to political office who professes to be a Christian -- when the fact is, that even though such an individual may be a far better person than his opponents, he may be very, very far from being a genuinely born-again man of God -- and, he may espouse things which are quite harmful, both for Christians and all others under his administration.

I am now 66 years old, but NEVER -- during the many elections in which I have been eligible to vote -- have I voted for a President, Senator, Representative, or Governor because I was convinced that he was a born-again Christian. Instead, I have tried to vote for the one I considered to be the better person for the job -- and many times for the one whom I considered to be "the lesser of two evils."

Genuine, SPIRITUAL WISDOM is A "HIDDEN WISDOM, WHICH" (says St. Paul) "NONE OF THE PRINCES OF THIS WORLD KNEW" when they "crucified [Christ Jesus] the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:7-8). Very, very few of today's political princes really KNOW Christ --

and perhaps NONE of them do! That explains why many of them can "sweet-talk" Christian Conservatives to get their vote and then fail to do those things which promote and protect true Christian values.

I have never felt that because a man running for political office got my vote I was, therefore, obligated to -- or always wise to -- support everything that politician did after he was in office -- EVEN IF HIS OPPONENTS ESPOUSED THINGS MUCH WORSE!

And, to make the man for whom you voted the deciding factor in your Christian fellowship is a grievous fault! None should be cut off from your Christian fellowship because they belong to the opposite political party than do you, or because they criticize the policies of the one for whom you voted! NO POLITICAL PRINCE should be considered as too good and too wise to warrant any criticism of his deeds!

SHAME ON THOSE who put such "confidences in princes" and who cannot abide any honest question being raised about the wisdom of the man or woman for whom they voted!

As the inspired Psalmist said, "It is better to TRUST IN THE LORD than to put confidence in princes" (Psa. 118:9). It is best not to place too much confidence in the wisdom of one's political leaders. It is good to realize that the best of them are prone to human error, and the less than best among them are prone to do whatever they think will promote their political career, regardless of how detrimental it is to the moral and social fiber of their nation. Yes, honor these political princes to the degree such honor is due, and pray for them -- but don't be so naive and gullible as to believe that the person you helped put into office can do no wrong and should be exempt from all criticism!

Indeed, the Psalmist put it even stronger when he wrote: "PUT NOT YOUR TRUST IN PRINCES, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help" (Psa. 146:3).

At the end of this age, Israel is going to PUT THEIR TRUST IN "THE PRINCE THAT SHALL COME" (Daniel 9:26). The "Man of Sin" will be the consummate, polished politician, and millions, not only in Israel, but around the entire world as well, will PUT THEIR CONFIDENCE IN HIM as one who can do no wrong! Only after it is everlastingly too late, shall most of those millions discover how totally they have misplaced their trust!

As it now appears, TWO PREVIOUS HDM EMAIL RECIPIENTS have decided this week that they would rather hear no more from yours truly than to read any more of my opinions concerning some of our President's policies. That, of course, is their privilege. None need to agree with me, but neither should any be so gullible or so proud as to insist that their Political Prince can do no wrong, and cut off from their friendship anyone who questions his wisdom.

Holiness Folks: -- "PUT NOT YOUR TRUST IN PRINCES"! -- even if they belong to your political party, profess to be Christians, and strike you as far better than their opponents. Don't consider them to be incapable of doing wrong and immune from criticism, and don't insist that to be your friend and to have your Christian fellowship, all must praise "your man" or at least never question his deeds! "It is better to TRUST IN THE LORD than to put [such biased

and prejudiced] confidence in princes" -- and it is better that you allow others to hold and express opinions contrary to your own regarding "your man"!

It is bad enough when Conservative Christians make total agreement with their personal, spiritual convictions the prerequisite to their fellowship. It is even worse when they make total agreement with their political persuasions the precondition to having their friendship and fellowship!

I intend to continue to express my opinions and views -- especially when I feel that they have a direct or important bearing upon crucial, spiritual developments. I do hope that most will allow me that freedom, without insisting that I keep quiet when they disagree.

Here, I forbear, except to say, THANKS TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN GRACIOUS ENOUGH TO DO THIS, AND TO HOLD US UP IN PRAYER -- EVEN THOUGH THEY DISAGREE WITH SOME OF WHAT I SET FORTH. -- Duane

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07 -- THE PRIDE AND PRICE OF FREEDOM TOWER

"And they said.. LET US BUILD US a city and a TOWER, whose top may reach unto heaven..." (Genesis 11:4).

"For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" (Luke 14:28).

* * *

I seldom send out HDM articles on the Lord's Day. However, today is also our nation's Fourth of July, and since a notable event occurred yesterday that conjoins the horrors of September 11th with memory of July 4th, I have decided to send forth this little article now.

Today, July 4, 2004, the granite cornerstone for "Freedom Tower" was laid at the site of the destroyed World Trade Center Towers in New York City. The design of this tower ties it directly to July 4, 1776, while at the same time conjoining it with Black Tuesday, September 11, 2001. Chosen from among other proposals and designs, "Freedom Tower" is to stand 1776 feet tall -- at once commemorating the Declaration of our National Independence on July 4, 1776 and making it the tallest building in the world.

Nevertheless, while this project is impressive, it does not strike me as necessary and wise. Its shape appears to me as quite outlandish (a swirling, twisting design), and I fear that it is little more than another grandiose scheme which smacks more of New York City pride than it does of honoring the thousands who died there, or of remembering our first Independence Day. The prevailing spirit in New York City has for hundreds of years been altogether too similar to that of the proud Babylonians whose original architects said, "let us build US a CITY."

For long decades, New York City has prided itself as being the biggest, the tallest, the wealthiest, the best city on planet earth -- with little elsewhere being higher than its insurmountable ego.

Perhaps the best verbalization of what I assert is found in the song, "New York, New York," written by Fred Ebb and John Kander and popularized in the late 1970s and early '80s by singers like Liza Minelli and Frank Sinatra. Below are some of the words:

"I wanna wake up in a city that doesn't sleep
And find I'm king of the hill, top of the heap.
These little town blues are melting away;
I'll make a brand new start of it, in old New York.
If I can make it there, I'll make it anywhere.."

The first line quoted above voices a thought similar to that expressed in another song from the 1940s that glamorized New York City night-life: "When a Broadway [girl] says Good-night, its early in the morning."

The second line expresses the pride of NYC in being "king of the hill, top of the heap" -- far and away above and beyond any other city. The words "These little town blues are melting away" in line three above insinuate that those who dwell in this city above all cities no longer need to feel depressed about being part of something small, for NOW they are part of the biggest of the big! These sentiments are quite different from those of One who was very content to be born in the "little town" of Bethlehem and to dwell in the "little town" of Nazareth.

I say none of the preceding to suggest that there are not thousands in New York City who are humble and that there are not many there who are God-fearing folks who feel no such city-pride nor indulge in such boasting. I do say, however, that too many within it and too much within it reflects a pride that is an affront to the God who says in Proverbs 16:18 "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall," and who says in Proverbs 29:23 "A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit."

Let me present a little acrostic concerning the 1,776 foot high "Freedom TOWER," the cornerstone of which was laid today:

T-arget for another terrorist attack
O-utlandish example of modern architecture
W-aste of money
E-gotism 1,776 feet high
R-eminiscent of the Tower of Babel

Instead of creating a beautiful, memorial garden for the thousands killed there on September 11, 2001, those in NYC have said to the terrorists, in so many words:-- "You destroyed the WTC Towers, we will SHOW YOU! We shall erect on the same site an even taller tower, and we dare you to try to bring it down!" This monolithic monstrosity, in my view,

will pose itself as another big target to terrorists who hate everything good and bad about America.

"Pride goeth before destruction!" It went before the destruction of the WTC Towers, and it is certain to precede the destruction of "Freedom Tower," if it is successfully raised. How do I know that? To use the words of a song by Dale Evans, "How do I know? The Bible tells me so."

"WHERE does the Bible assert such a thing!" do you ask? Isaiah 30:25 speaks of "the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall." And Isaiah 2:12, 15 declares: "The day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up.. And upon every high tower.."

In writing these things, I do not wish more evil to befall our nation -- I do not welcome the destruction of "Freedom Tower" and the death of many more Americans. No, not at all! But, let me tell you, folks, the DAY is coming when GOD HIMSELF IS GOING TO DESTROY EVERY PROUD TOWER ON EARTH! And, even if "Freedom Tower" is erected, and even if it is kept safe from destruction at the hands of terrorists, and even if it does withstand the quakings and erosions of time till Jesus comes again -- it will fall on that DAY!

What America really needs today, July 4, 2004, is NOT the raising up of another monument to NYC and American pride, but the humbling of all of its citizens under the Mighty Hand of God. Every proud, skyscraping casino in Las Vegas, Nevada is a monument to losers! And every proud tower raised in New York City and elsewhere across our nation and around the globe shall, in the end, be nothing more than a monument to losers -- eternal losers when Jesus comes again.

The Psalmist declared in Psalm 18:2 "The LORD is my rock.. and my HIGH TOWER." On July 4, 2004, it is THE LORD WHO SHOULD BE RAISED UP! -- NOT another T-arget for another terrorist attack -- NOT another O-utlandish example of modern architecture whose twisted, twirling design speaks of how mixed up America is! -- NOT another W-aste of money -- Not another example of E-gotism 1,776 feet high! -- and certainly not another proud structure R-eminiscent of the Tower of Babel!

America does NOT need "Freedom Tower" -- America needs "Freedom From Sin"! America DOES need the ONLY TOWER that can afford this nation real protection -- "THE NAME OF THE LORD IS A STRONG TOWER: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" (Proverbs 18:10). Our only real safety lies WITHIN CHRIST JESUS, but instead of His being exalted in the USA today, to a very great extent His Name is being despised, cast down, used as a by-word, and cast out by millions of our citizens.

Just yesterday, NPR radio carried an interview with an actor who played the part of Jesus in some anti-Christian movie. Part of this actor's monologue in the movie was aired during the radio interview, and it had Jesus talking to himself about what a hypocrite he was! -- along with other words intended to convey the thought that Jesus was nothing more than a "freaked out" and frightful human fraud! "This is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world" (1 John 4:3).

So, here we have it: -- After having spiritually cast down Christ Jesus, America's only HIGH TOWER of safety, and after having experienced the horrendous destruction of the Twin Towers of the WTC, those in New York City have laid the cornerstone for "Freedom Tower," a structure which appears to me as one more indication of America's Bondage to Sin and the exaltation of satanically-inflated, Carnal Pride.

If this is true, THERE SHALL BE A HUGE PRICE TO PAY for this project: "For which of you," said Jesus, "intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" (Luke 14:28).

THE PRIDE of "Freedom Tower" is all too apparent. THE PRICE for raising it up is probably unseen by those who now plan to do so. It cannot be reckoned in dollars. It can only be reckoned in terms of what it costs to erect this tower while casting down the Name of Christ. Those who proposed building the Tower of Babel may have had "sufficient" means and labor "to finish it." They did not have "sufficient" power "to finish it" once God ordained their scattering and the discontinuance of their proud project.

God may allow NYC builders both sufficient money and power to finish "Freedom Tower," but is it going to be worth the cost eternally? -- when money that could be used to build shrines of worship for Christ is instead used to build a "show-off" of carnal pride -- and all of this while Jesus' Name is being cast down as worthless? NO! -- TEN MILLION TIMES, NO!

2 Chronicles 6:23 speaks of God "requiting the wicked, by recompensing his way upon his own head." What people raise up wickedly in Time shall fall certainly and eternally upon their heads at the Judgment.

Do I hear someone say, "Well, I doubt that what they are doing in New York City is all that bad! It actually has value and merit that should be praised, not criticized!"

While this may seem to be the case, remember, Jesus said in Luke 13:4-5 "Those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

The magnitude of the cost for raising "Freedom Tower" -- while at the same time casting down the Name of Christ -- can only be measured when the eternal consequences for so doing are figured in -- and some who are involved in this proud project may then rue the fact that they did not "sit down first and count that cost"!

When Christ is revealed as "KING OF THE HILL" and all within the New Jerusalem are dwelling "ON TOP OF THE HEAP," how many of those who "wanna wake up in a city that doesn't sleep" will open their eyes instead in that eternal abode that is immeasurably below and forever separated from the bliss of THAT BRIGHT AND HIGHLY EXALTED CITY!? Selah.

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THE END

