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# SERIOUS EXPOSTULATION

ADDRESSED TO

MR. A——— J———

ON THE SUBJECT OF

HIS RECENT BOOK.

By D. W.

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LONDON:

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## A SERIOUS EXPOSTULATION.

April, 1869.

DEAR MR. J——,

The subject of our recent correspondence is so important, and the feeling it has left with me is so strong, that I can scarcely think it to be other than a duty to leave some record of it.

About six months ago I printed four pages on "Foolish and Unlearned Questions." I had previously printed sixteen pages on "Eternal Punishment." Finding you had published anonymously a book entitled "The Restitution of all Things," I thought well to send you my four pages. You acknowledged them in a letter, which read rather tart. Correspondence ensued; you pressed me, for "old love's sake," (for we had been *long*, if not intimately, known to each other,) to go through your book, marking what I considered *unscriptural*; and promised that if your main thought were shown to be an error, you would not only not print another edition, but would publish a retraction. Nothing could read more fair, and after hesitating on the ground of my age (seventy-five) I consented; and shortly after sent you your book *freely annotated in the margins*,—bargaining that it should be returned,—so that it is now before me, to be produced, if required. As you now put forth a second edition, *with your name*, and without, so far as I have noticed, retracting anything, I feel free in the interest of others to give a brief epitome of

what passed between us. One brother, whom we both respect, looked into your book, but declined to go through it. It is true you offered to appeal to scripture, or, as you said, *holy writ*. I enquired if you would treat scripture as *holy*; or whether you would go to scripture, as a housewife to her bag of pieces to make a patchwork to her mind. I had been grieved by your fanciful application of God's word. Others had remonstrated; and a reviewer, noticing your "Types of Genesis," had remarked that you had done more than any man living to *discredit* allegorical interpretations. I now feel I should not have trusted to your professed subjection to the written word; but should have stipulated for your first giving up your statement that scripture is a veil quite as much as a revelation, and also withdrawing your expressed contempt for the obvious, as mere "sense-readings, *all* more or less fallacious and untrustworthy." How it was you did not feel the irreverence of such a thought I know not. But your letters were plausibly and touchingly worded. You wrote me that you had for years set apart weeks together in fasting—praying for an opening of God's mind. I observed that truth must be learned through *the scripture*; that I knew of no promise of additional light as to God's counsels to those who should fast often. On the contrary, Paul writing to Timothy concerning "sound doctrine" and "a sound mind" enjoined a *little wine*; and I referred to Romish saints—such as Ignatius Loyola, who fasted long, and woke to have a vision of the *Virgin*, and to found the order of Jesuits. I knew that your position had been somewhat isolated, and that there was reason to fear you had been feeding on dainty excerpts from the more imaginative of the fathers. I remarked that a wise fasting denies what *tends to excess*; and in the case of some would consist in abstaining from indulging the imagination; also that the highest quality of mind is rather *moral*

than *mental*—a firmness that mortifies the bias to which by nature or habit we incline.

This moral firmness seems especially called for, when we are solicited by theories leaning in the direction of the prevailing laxity, and set off by amiable sentiment.

However, as you appeal to scripture, it is to scripture I recall you. I ask, Are you not “*prophesying out of your own heart?*” and, If your notions are put forth without a *plain* commission from God, are you not in effect “*POLLUTING HIM,*” and “*strengthening the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life?*” (See Ezek. xiii.) God will do right. We ought not to want a *theory*; and yours is one of the loosest possible; a cloud,—invulnerable only because intangible by argument. And, even if your theory could bear examination, the *natural* mind could scarcely be satisfied with the picture your book presents of a “dark and fiery world,” with its “lake of fire,” and thousands of years of purgatorial transformation, by “fire melting all *arrogance* into *humility*; till all that is *self* has died in the bloody sweat and all-saving cross of Christ;” and so “making men partakers of Christ’s flesh and blood”!!\* all expressions directly opposed to scripture and experience.

In returning my *comments*, you expressed yourself “simply astonished at some, indeed most of them.” You said you “could scarcely have believed that a thirty years’ reader of the Bible (you might have said for double that period) could have made them.” Your thoughts had been nursed and dressed, and you hugged them the more when they were criticised.

You added red ink notes by way of rejoinder, calling my special attention to “thoughts or facts” which you had written

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\* The words extracted from *Law*, but see *your* words at pp. 58, 66, 70.

on the blank paper. You there relate, that "when Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood, no medical man who was *over forty* received the discovery." To this I answered that Harvey demonstrated his *fact* in presence of Charles the First. You observed that "the mind of those long schooled in certain opinions is like the pupil of the eye; the more the light you pour on it, the more it contracts." I could only answer that the pupil of the eye, when in health, *contracts*. You added, that "every true thought *knocks the wind out of somebody*;" and that "both Euclid and theology have a *pons asinorum*, or *asses' bridge*;" that "in Euclid they say, 'This puzzle is the famous bridge of asses, for he is one who *stops*, not he who *passes*;' but that in theology it is the reverse, 'He is not one who *stops*, but he who *passes*.'" I might have answered that I had no wish to cross the bridge by *ballooning*.

I had spoken out as to *Mysticism*. You asked me to define it. I said I could not, and that neither could I define a *sound mind*, although we all could feel where it was wanting. *Mysticism*, you added, was "with most only something *above them*;" and you asked "what the Jews might have said of Paul's words in 1 Cor. xi. 3-12 and Heb. vii.?" In your *first* letter you had said, "One would think from your paper\* you were *suddenly* seized with a *fear* of holy scripture." I replied, "This is scarcely fair; I don't think I ever was indifferent to true doctrine. Thirty years ago I left my old moorings to attach myself to *scripture* only,"—(a position I still acknowledge as among my chief blessings). You do not seem to approve of this position. In one of your later letters you remark that "*seeing* depends not least on our *position*;" and you go on to say that, perhaps, you "ought not to expect *me* to *move*

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\* My four pages, annexed to this.

*again at my time of life.*" I have no thought of a change. The question between us turned principally on the way in which scripture should be regarded and handled. I objected to the licence you allowed yourself in fanciful analogies. In reply you referred to 1 Cor. xi. and Heb. vii., where the *inspired* apostle, writing "*commandments from the Lord,*" illustrates *Divine* truth by analogies drawn from nature, or from institutions of *Divine* appointment. You seem to imply that a certain *resemblance* to the apostle's *manner* was your justification. But this leaves out of account the difference between *inspired* words and your own! What, think you, should we say, if a *twenty-third* chapter of the *Apocalypse* were produced, and commended to us on such grounds?

But is not this *real* degrading of scripture contained in *principle*, and exemplified in other parts of your book? *e. g.* :—

"All the utterances of good and true men are aspects of the mystery of the Incarnation. Our nature is double—male and female, head and heart, intellect and affection. Out of the heart the letter of scripture has been brought forth; the human form of the Divine Word *exactly* (!) as Christ was conceived and born of the Virgin Mary." Again, "The mystery of the Incarnate Word is the key to the mystery of the written word;" "the invisible God being manifested in some *creature form*." And (elsewhere), "The first sense-readings of Scripture are *never* to be relied on." And you raise the startling question, "*Who but Adam and Lucifer were the two thieves crucified with Christ?*" (See pp. 60, 65 to 69.)

To my mind this is nothing but extravagant *mysticism*, unless some should recognise in the opening sentence a dash of those *Broad Church teachings*, which a friend of ours has amusingly described as "endeavouring to put the Ocean in their cup."

I protested against your sending abroad whole pages of



*declamation* against, what I will not call the *popular* view, for in one sense it is anything but *popular*, but against the view given (as you own) in passages of scripture, and accepted, or I would rather say, *bowed to*, by most Christians.

You quote a sentence from S. Augustine. I think I could refer you to other words of that eminent Christian Ancient, conceived in a different and milder spirit.\* You cite a passage from Th. Aquinas, and another from Peter Lombard, both breathing the sternness—I was going to say the *savagery*—of their times. To Th. Aquinas and Peter Lombard it might have been said, “Ye know not what spirit ye are of.” In my answer I reminded you that “*Peter the fisherman of Galilee wrote nothing like Peter Lombard.*”

You draw back, as I do, from the exaggeration of preachers who *dilate* on the subject of future punishment; but is that a reason for betaking yourself to mystical fancies, which can only be met, as we would meet a Swedenborgian—by solemn warning? It may be weakness of judgment; but whatever it be, it has led you into error of the very gravest character. I do not believe that in putting forth your book, you could have considered the 13th chapter, verse 22, of the prophet *Ezekiel*; and the yet more weighty words (as having their application *in the church*) of Paul in Galatians i., 9th verse, which contemplates the case of one who *preaches* or publishes “*good news, or gospel, going beyond or outside* (*παρά*) *the gospel that Paul preached.*” Let me solemnly commend both passages to your prayerful *meditation*, with a rigorous *fasting from imagination*. God can give grace for this.

The apostle indeed wrote in Philippians ii., of God *exalting* Christ, that “at the name of *Jesus* every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and in earth, and *under the earth* (*καταχθονίως*)

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\* Civ. Dei. i. 21. See also Burnet on the Articles, Art. ix.

and every tongue confess that Jesus is *Lord*." I remarked, that *you* made the RECONCILING in Colossians i. co-extensive with this *subjection* in Phil. ii; and I asked, *Where is the Scripture proof?* You rejoined, "St. John sees every creature in heaven, and on earth, and *under the earth*, (underlined,) praising and blessing the Lamb." (See Rev. v. 13.) On this I turned to the Codex Sinaiticus, generally allowed to be the most ancient witness of the inspired *Greek* text, and I need hardly say I was surprised and interested by discovering that the words "*under the earth*," *ὑποκάτω γῆς τῆς*, are *not there*. \*

No manuscript of nearly the same early date, so far as I can learn, has the words; and I have ascertained that the *Coptic*, the earliest extant *version*—as early in the opinion of the learned editor (Wilkins, Oxon., 1716) as the beginning of the *second* century—also *wants the words*. I reported this discovery to you;—and I think every reader of what I now write will be as dissatisfied as I was with your reply, which runs thus—"Many thanks for your summary of the various readings of Rev. v. 13. But they do not seem to me to have *any appreciable weight* either one way or the other on the question," &c. *And yet this was the one passage to which you referred me*. You could hardly maintain that the words should be allowed to stand as part of holy scripture. So you take new ground, and tell me to compare Phil. ii. 11 with 1 Cor. xii., where the same apostle (speaking of *gift in the church*) says, "No one can say Jesus is *Lord*, but by the Holy Ghost;" and you add "*at least so scripture says*," just as if I was opposing scripture! I might direct you to Matt. vii. 21, 22; xxv. 44; Luke vi. 46. But I forbear:—I am satisfied. The facts as to Rev. v. 13 will be *appreciated* by Biblical critics,

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\* That this cannot be from what is called *homeoteleuton*, appears from the *same* words being also omitted in the third verse.

and are likely to command all the *more attention*, from your having rested on the words in question for the support of your doctrine of a *restitution of all things*; by which *you* mean, what, I venture to submit, scripture does not mean.

And here I may put the question, whether it is quite *fair* to assume as the *title* of your book a phrase—accepted because found in our *English Bibles*—that *covers over*, and introduces a thought not contained in the *words themselves*, or warranted by their *context*? For “restitution of all things” was a *Jewish* hope, grounded on promises to *that nation*: it was the “restoring of the kingdom to *Israel*.” “Elias was to come and restore all things,” *i.e. Jewish things*. It was the coming age. See Peter’s address to the men of *Israel* in Acts iii. All the kindreds of the earth are to be blessed in *Abraham* and his seed. His seed, that is Christ, would gather in one the children of God scattered abroad. Hereafter, all the *nations* (*then existing on the earth*) shall be blessed under the righteous rule of the millennium. *Legislation*, not the Mosaic law, is to go forth from *Jerusalem*. See how this restitution is spoken of in Matt. xvii. 11, Mark ix. 12, Acts i. 6, iii. 21. Further: we learn that as *in Adam*—all in him (*i.e. having him as their head*) die,—so *all in Christ* (or having him as their head) shall be made alive. Thus the hymn calls Him “head of the new creation.”

You speak of its being “God’s will by a firstborn to save the later born, *according to the law*, if the firstfruits are holy, the lump is also holy.”(!) But we read in 1 Cor. xv. “Christ, the firstfruits, afterwards they that are *Christ’s* at his coming.” If I understand *your* view, it makes *Christ* as “firstfruits” the *Saviour* of those who are *none of his*!

I had already noticed the word *κόλασις* as presumably meaning the same in Matt. xxv. as in 1 John iv.; *checking—restraining*.

You make it a "proof" (!!) that those who go away into *everlasting* punishment are "not wholly unblessed."

It is instructive to notice the relation between the two schools of thought—*Universal Restoration* and *Annihilation*. Both run together in the denial of *eternal punishment*. Beyond that point they are hopelessly at variance, though there may be a *truce*. Thus the Annihilationist charges the orthodox with having a God like *Moloch*; while the Universalist, who *makes room for the salvation of Satan himself*, brings the same charge in yet stronger terms against those who own a God who saves *only* the "firstfruits" or "firstborn," or "election;" thus "making Him worse than *Moloch*." (See p. 39 of your book.)

All this is strange. Universalist and non-eternity views are no novelty in the Church; what is novel is the contempt expressed by the heterodox of our day for the teaching of eighteen centuries!

For myself—I am not bound by traditional misapplication of certain scriptures differing widely in *tissue*; as the didactic,—the figurative or parabolic, and teaching by vision.

To yourself—I would say "Suffer my words of expostulation:" *Examine* and see if you are not publishing ANOTHER GOSPEL and POLLUTING GOD by presenting Him as giving a promise of life,—life to come and eternal,—to the *wicked*. Herein—in my opinion—lies the extreme gravity of your error.

Yours in the faith of the Gospel,

D. W.

\* \* The references are to your *first* edition.

[Turn over.

## NOTA BENE.

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1. A *fusion together* of texts may *confuse* the judgment.
2. *Present* Grace offered is not *future* Grace after the Judgment.
3. Such expressions as “therefore,” “exactly as,” “just as,” “perfect key,” require that we should see on what they rest.
4. Difficult passages, such as 1 Peter iii. 18, and Jude 9, should not be looked to for *light* on others.
5. “God cannot do more than he has done for man:” “*Law* and *Gospel* are His two Covenants.”—A. J. Most true. He is willing that all should be saved; but it is not said that this is willed *absolutely*, so that it must come to pass.
6. As to “God’s life being again raised up in man,” I see nothing of it in scripture. It is William Law who says “the birth of the Son of God was *extinguished* in the soul by our first parents.” Pp. 118 and 60.
7. *Disable* instead of *destroy*,—*are perishing* instead of *are lost*,—are emendations of our translation to be considered.
8. The truth to be especially kept is Atonement by *Substitution*: they that are Christ’s crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts when they were joined to Christ by *believing*; they have died with Him by *imputation*. Now they *mortify* their members which are upon earth.
9. *Saviour* may be rendered *Preserver* in 1 Tim. iv. 10.
10. *Finite* I understand to be what *may*, not what *must*, come to an end.
11. The Gospel by its *freeness* is *God-glorifying*. Grace *abounds*, and is *higher in quality*—not *wider in range* than all going before:—*faith* is come.—Gal. iii. 23-25.
12. “The true light *now* shineth.”—1 Jno. ii. 8.

## A FEW THOUGHTS

### ON

### FOOLISH AND UNLEARNED QUESTIONS.

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“Shun profane and vain babblings, they will increase unto more ungodliness, and their word will eat as a canker; of whom are Hymenæus and Philetus. . . . Foolish and unlearned questions *avoid*, they do gender *strifes*; and the *servant* of the Lord must not *strive*, but be gentle unto all, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing opposers.”—(2 Timothy ii. 16, 23-25.)

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Questions (*zeeteeseis*) are enquiries;—foolish or rebellious (*môros*); \* unlearned (*apaideutos*, a word used among the Greeks of an ill-ordered, unskilful witness;—perhaps as going off the line.)

I would read, ‘not learned as a (*pais*) child learns under (*paidia*) instruction,—UNINSTRUCTED.’

*AVOID* (*paraitou*, from *para* and *aitéō*,) deprecate, beg off from,—‘asking thyself off from.’

Timothy had known the holy scriptures *from his infancy*; they were able to make him wise unto *salvation* through faith in Christ,—*not* to enable him to judge of God’s judgments after death.

Our aim should be to keep the Church’s teaching *pure* from men’s imaginations,—discouraging novelties in doctrine by *declining to discuss them*.

If a new doctrine impugns the old truth we are told to “*contend earnestly* for the faith delivered to the saints.”

Hymenæus and Philetus had erred, saying the resurrection was passed. Had they confounded the *resurrection-life in the believer* with the future ‘redemption of the body?’

The active minds of *Greek* converts may have anticipated many of our questions. (Heb. vi. 3.)

Two views of future judgment are now actively propagated: they seem to come of the same root:—one teaches the *Non-Eternity of Punishment*,—the other, *Universal Salvation*:—both profess to clear away a cloud on God’s character.

I ask, have these things (*zeeteeseis*) been learned as a *child* (*pais*)

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\* R. Young’s translation,—perhaps as breaking prescribed bounds.

learns what are to be matters for its after enquiry? or do they come out of the restlessness of our fallen nature?

Questions touching our future destiny must affect us in the way of hope or fear. I doubt our capacity for considering them impartially, or as abstract enquiries. There is, besides, *prejudice for or against*, and the blinding *self-sufficiency* that despises both views alike.

We need not deny the *possibility* of annihilation. 'God only *hath* immortality' as His *indefeasible* attribute. What is denied is that there is authority for teaching it. Such teaching cannot be a thing *morally truthful* unless it can be shown to be *undeceiving* to our *receptivity*; which receptivity is a faculty fallen from heavenly uprightness.

In vain shall we promise ourselves liberty, if we are, all the while, (though it may be *unconsciously*,) entangled in, and servants of our corruptions. *Uprightness* is found in bowing to the only true God. The words given by His inspiration will keep our thoughts,—direct *dogmatic* words,—the "*intent*" of a *parable*, or the *effect* of a *vision*.

*Aiônios*, everlasting, is a word found in connections that forbid our understanding it as always meaning *never-ending*. But then in other texts it can mean nothing less.

If in Matthew xxv. it does not mean that punishment is endless, then the same word in the same verse does not teach the endless *life* of the righteous. It may be said that the word is there used to exclude the fear of the *life* coming to an end: this is all I would ask; for then it equally forbids the holding out any hope of the end of *punishment*.

The orthodox go, I think, too far when they challenge the heterodox to name any words in which the eternity of punishment could have been conveyed other than what we find; for it may be objected that we do not find it said of the wicked—"Neither *CAN* they die any more." But there is a declaration to the same effect in the 9th of Hebrews—"It is appointed unto men once (only *once*) to die, and after that judgment:"—without a word to authorize the expectation that judgment *after death* will be followed by *another salvation*, or by *annihilation*.

*Olethros*, the word rendered *destruction* in 2 Thessalonians i. 9, cannot be rested on by an Annihilist, seeing it is the same word as is found in 1 Corinthians v. 5; 1 Thessalonians v. 3; 1 Timothy vi. 9.

If *aiônios* be rendered 'age-during,' the orthodox doctrine would not be touched or set aside.

So the word *soteeria* (salvation) is used in different senses; but it remains undeniably true that *the salvation* PREACHED in the New Testament is *one* and *eternal*.

If the advocate of the Annihilist view should urge that God will not put an end to the happiness of the saved, but is free to terminate the sufferings of the lost, we seem shut up to answer,—Show us, if you can, any authority for such teaching.

Timothy had known the scriptures from a child. When Christians read scripture with *child-like* spirits, do they rise from their reading with any other impression than that the unhappiness of the *unsaved* is hopeless and endless?

"Nothing is more practical than expectation." *Expectation* moulds soul and walk. Hence we are warned not to add to, or take from, the words of the Apocalypse given to Christ's servants for a coming day of trial.

*Before that day* we should watch against speculations that go to change the *mould* in which is formed the character of those who wait for Christ's appearing. Such speculations, in attempting to clear God's character, may really change it, and *us*, as imitators of Him.

There is a most righteous anger against ingratitude and cruelty. *We* feel this when we feel *rightly*. Shall we refuse to own something answering to this in God,—only absolutely perfect and infinite in strength,—reserved for the 'day of wrath and revelation of His righteous judgment.'

To those who 'know Him and obey the gospel' God is LOVE. *Life* is a word always used in scripture in a good sense—as *happiness*. Its opposite, *death*, would therefore not be extinction of being. '*Destroy*,' '*consume*,' '*devour*,' '*cause to perish*,' are words used where they *cannot* mean annihilation. We might fairly ask for, at least, three or four plain texts to warrant the teaching that they who in this life *reject Christ*, will, after '*few or many stripes*,' be *saved* or *annihilated*. That God will return and again take up ISRAEL is not to the point.

The doctrine of *Annihilation*, and still more of *Universalism*, sets before a world of unbelieving sinners, a *hope* that God has nowhere authorized.

The duty of Christians when strange opinions are started is to decline them, or excuse themselves from discussing them, as being outside the covers of that Bible that thoroughly furnishes to all good works. We *naturally* like to *know*, but it may be *better* and *more blessed* to *trust*.

There is a great difference between those 'sick in thought,' and those who inoculate others with error. For the former there should be much "patience," "in meekness instructing:"—but if any actively propagate error,—gathering others to their opinions,—they will bear the plain marks of a heretic, "self-condemned," and "to be rejected."

I press the duty of guarding the *Gospel of our Salvation* uncorrupt; and I ask the reader's attention to the words of the apostle in Galatians i.;—premising that I take the word *anathema* to mean *laid up and left for God to judge*. Whoever preached another (*heteros*, different) gospel, though in one sense not another (*allos*); and whoever—though he might be an angel from heaven—preached, *i.e.* *evangelized* or *brought good news*, beyond or *aside from* (*para*) the gospel Paul had preached, and the Galatians received, was to be *anathema*.

In conclusion, thankfully should we accept any help through amended



renderings of the inspired original. Nor would the truly orthodox refuse to listen, if a more exact scholarship or criticism could show any ground for thinking that some two or three texts have been interpolated:—but as this cannot be shown, and is not so much as pretended, we may see in such texts the occasion for humbling our proud reason in faith in God's judgments as perfect in *righteousness* and *true holiness*.

I desire to *quiet* the minds of believers. *Unbelievers* may thrust these questions forward, but it is not reasonable in any who have *not* "received the truth in the love of it that they may be saved," to object to a *doctrine* of scripture that should only come before those who *have received the scriptures*.

I would remark, however, that the apostles preached God's Love, and that He had appointed a day in which He would judge the world in *righteousness* by the Man He had raised from the dead. Paul's spirit was stirred within him as he moved among the vanities of idol worship, and heard the disputes of philosophers. Most of his hearers turned away; and he '*departed*.' Yet we do not read of his dilating on the judgment hereafter, or wringing his hands over the fate of those who mocked. The Gospel was to be preached as a witness to *all*; and he went forward in his service of '*gathering out a people*.' So when one enquired, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" Christ said, "*Strive* to enter in at the *strait gate*." Only let men be *well in earnest*, as consciously *sick* and desiring salvation, and the difficulties we have been considering will not hinder their going in at the *strait gate*.

D. W.

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[“An Enquiry into Everlasting Punishment,” in 16 pp., price twopence, to be had, *post-free*, on application by letter to D. W., 14, Oxford Terrace, enclosing three postage stamps.]

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THE GLORIOUS ERA;

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BY THE

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