

# THE REMEMBRANCER.

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A MONTHLY MAGAZINE  
FOR  
THE LORD'S PEOPLE.

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“ Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you  
always in remembrance of these things, though  
ye know them. Yea, . . . I think it meet, . . .  
to stir you up by putting you in remembrance ”  
2nd Peter i. 12, 13.

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VOLUME V.

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# The Remembrancer.

## THE TRUE SPIRIT OF WAITING FOR JESUS.

"It is not he loves the coming of the Lord, who asserts that it is near; or he who asserts that it is not near: but he rather who, whether it be near or afar off, waits for it in the sincerity of faith, the firmness of hope, and the ardour of love."

—AUGUSTINE.

### "TO-DAY OR TO-MORROW."

"The dark stream of evil is flowing apace :"  
Awake, and be doing, ye children of grace.  
Let us seek with compassion the souls that are lost,  
Well knowing the price their redemption has cost.  
While singing with rapture the Saviour's great  
love,  
And waiting for Him to translate us above,  
"It may be to-morrow, or even to-night,"  
Let loins be well girded, and lamps burning bright.

We're journeying on to the realms of the blest,  
We're nearer each day to our heavenly rest ;  
But when we reach home, and its regions of joy,  
No labours of mercy our hands can employ :  
No mourning ones *there* shall we meet to console,  
No wand'ers to rescue, or sick ones make whole,  
No weak ones to cherish, no lost ones to find—  
These labours of love we shall all leave behind.

The house, and the land, and the wealth in the  
chest,  
Give plenty occasions for ministries blest ;

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Let's use them to lessen the lone widow's grief,  
 To fatherless children give welcome relief ;  
 The doubting and fearful, to them let us bring  
 Those tidings of mercy that cause us to sing.  
 Then let us " to-morrow, and even to-day,"  
 Be true to our mission while down here we stay.

Yes, let us with ardour the present redeem---  
 Our joy and our glory to imitate Him,  
 The Shepherd, who travail'd his lost sheep to save,  
 And His blood for their ransom on Calvary gave.  
*Self* was never His object ; Himself He denied ;  
 For others, each moment, He liv'd and He died !  
 We are left here to learn, and to copy His grace,  
 While He in the heavens secures us our place.

Then, Lord, while my spirit so yearns to get home,  
 I'd learn to be patient till Thou for us come ;  
 E'en now is my spirit so happy in Thee,  
 I can bear here to tarry till Thcu call for me.  
 In the patience of hope I will spend Thy delay,  
 'T would be selfish to wish e'en to hasten the day,  
 Assur'd Thy long-suffering alone stays the hour  
 When the " Day of the Lord " shall display its  
 dread power.

My Master ! I pray Thee to purge from my breast  
 All hard, selfish pining for ease and for rest.  
 Oh, make me delight in Thy service of love,  
 My heart all responsive to Thy heart above !  
 The time of my sojourn, how soon it may end !  
 Instruct me more wisely its " twelve hours " to  
 spend ;  
 That be it " to-morrow, or be it to-night,"  
 To win Thy approval be still my delight.

**UNSELFISHNESS.**

---

One thing impressed my mind most peculiarly when the Lord was first opening my eyes—I never found Christ doing a single thing for Himself. Here is an immense principle. There was not one act in all Christ's life done to serve or please Himself. An unbroken stream of blessed, perfect, un-failing love flowed from Him, no matter what the contradiction of sinners—one amazing and un-wavering testimony of love, and sympathy, and help; but it was ever others, and not Himself, that were comforted, and nothing could weary it, nothing turn it aside. Now the world's whole principle is self, doing w<sup>h</sup>at for itself. (Psalm xlix. 18.) Men know that it is upon the energy of selfishness they have to depend. Every one that knows anything of the world knows this. Without it the world could not go on. What is the world's honour? Self. What its wealth? Self. What is advancement in the world? Self. They are but so many forms of the same thing; the principle that animates the individual man in each is the spirit of self-seeking. The business of the world is the seeking of self, and the pleasures of the world are selfish pleasures. They are troublesome pleasures too; for we cannot escape from a world where God has said, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the ground," etc. Toil for self is irksome; but suppose a man finds out at length that the

busy seeking of self is trouble and weariness, and having procured the means of living without it, gives it up, what then? He just adopts another form of the same spirit of self and turns to selfish ease.

I am not now speaking of vice and gross sin (of course every one will allow that to be opposite to the spirit of Christ), but of the whole course of the world. Take the world's decent, moral man, and is he an "epistle of Christ"? Is there in him a single motive like Christ's? He may do the same things; he may be a carpenter as Christ was said to be (Mark vi. 3); but he has not one thought in common with Christ.

As to the outside, the world goes on with its religion and its philanthropy. It does good, builds its hospitals, feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, and the like; but its inward springs of action are not Christ's. Every motive that governed Christ all the way along is not that which governs men; and the motives which keep the world agoing are not those which were found in Christ at all.

The infidel owns Christ's moral beauty, and selfishness can take pleasure in unselfishness; but the Christian is to "put on Christ." He went about doing good all the day long; there was not a moment but He was ready as the servant in grace of the need of others. And do not let us suppose that this cost Him nothing. He had not where to lay His head; He hungered and was wearied;

and when He sat down, where was it? Under the scorching sun at the well's mouth, whilst His disciples went into the city to buy bread. And what then? He was as ready for the poor, vile sinner who came to Him, as if He had not hungered, neither was faint and weary. He was never at ease. He was in all the trials and troubles that man is in as the consequences of sin, and see how He walked! He made bread for others; but He would not touch a stone to turn it into bread for Himself. As to the moral motives of the soul, the man of the world has no one principle in common with Christ. If then the worldling is to read in the Christian the character of Christ, it is evident the world cannot read it in *him*; he is not a Christian; he is not in the road to heaven at all, and every step he takes only conducts him farther and farther from the object in view. When a man is in a wrong road, the farther he goes in it the more he is astray.

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**“WHAT HAVE THEY SEEN IN THINE HOUSE?”**

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In view of the general character of what passes current for Christianity in the present day, we need constantly to be reminded that it is not a fair exterior that meets the eye of Him who looketh, not on the outward appearance, but, on the heart; nor will even the greatest accuracy in spiritual things be accepted by Him as a substitute for a

heart won and held by Christ Himself. How apt we are to make more of the place than of the Person (who makes the place what it is); more of the blessings than of the Blessor; and the soul is thus subtilly beguiled from its first simplicity, from its cleaving with purpose of heart unto the Lord ("thou hast left *thy first love*").

There is ever the tendency to drift into mere religiousness, and, "having the form," to relegate everything to the coming together into one place; coming together very often as those who—like clocks—require to be wound up for another week, instead of being drawn by the power of irresistible attraction around Himself, to pour out of hearts, He has been causing to overflow throughout the week, what they can no longer contain in His presence. Even to Israel it was said, "None shall appear *before Me* empty" (Ex. xxiii. 15; xxxiv. 20; Deut. xvi. 16).

If we think of God manifest in the flesh, how was He so manifested? Was it not by, and in, *dwelling among us*; and, as it is put in that heart-touching word referring to His public ministry, "*All the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that He was taken up from us,*" and this has its voice *to us*, has it not, beloved Saints of God? That is to say, in all the common places, as *we* speak, of every-day life, the going out and the coming in—yea—as we find it in the first Psalm, in every attitude of the body, whether



walking, standing or sitting, the life is to be the outcome of what the heart is finding its delight in. In the Psalm alluded to, the delight of the heart is in the law of Jehovah, consequently, the motions of the body—walking, standing, sitting—are in keeping with that in which the delight is. Nor is it a spasmodic enjoyment, confined to rare occasions, or only finding its expression in the great congregation, but “in His law doth he meditate *day and night.*” Hence—freshness is characteristic—“like a tree planted by the rivers of water,” and fruitfulness also, “that bringeth forth his fruit in his season, his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” Ah! beloved! we can, it may be, accurately define what marks this present dispensation as to its distinctive privileges and blessings, in contrast with what preceded it, and all the while our hearts may be very far behind what this Psalm describes, viz., the heart’s delight and the heart’s meditation, day and night, affecting and determining the motions of the body, and resulting in freshness, fruitfulness, no signs of drought, and prosperity in “whatsoever he doeth;” for surely if my doings are the outcome of my delight of heart in Him, they cannot but prosper. (1 John iii. 22.)

It is not a heart delighting in its own state nor blessings, but in the revelation of God Himself. And what a revelation of Himself as the Father, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, has placed before the eyes of *our* hearts, in

which to delight, and upon which to meditate—as well we might—by day and by night! And how the Father addresses Himself to our hearts! He calls us *dear* children (Eph. v. 1). What affection! And as dear children we are to be imitators of Him, that thus the Father might be glorified by us. Thus He addresses His whole family, and tells us how to walk. But, I do not walk in order to have the Father call me His dear child, but because He has Himself placed me in that relationship; and that, not because of my behaviour, but, “having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, *according to the good pleasure of His will*” (Eph. i. 5). Thus He has a Father’s right to be heard in His family circle as a whole, and He has also His voice for each dear child, in whatever position such may be placed. He consequently looks into our dwellings, and there addresses the wives, the husbands, the children, the fathers, the servants, the masters, and again His whole family circle (Eph. v. and vi.).

In chap. v., having told us how to walk, He plainly intimates what is unbecoming and not to be once named among us; and, while we are all agreed that two of the things specified are of a gross character, yet we do well to note the company in which the third thing is placed, see third verse: “Fornication and all uncleanness or *covetousness*.” Read 4th and 5th verses likewise, and note that, while the first two ugly things are again mentioned in verse five, the third is also again



mentioned and commented upon, thus : "Nor covetous man, who is an idolater" (see also Col. iii. 5, "covetousness, which is idolatry"), that is to say, covetousness displaces God, and enthrones an idol in His place. Beloved, are we free from the spirit of this gross evil, the heinousness of which the Spirit of God here takes pains to put before us ; an evil which brought the first blot upon the church's history, through Ananias and Sapphira ; and with what has that first foul stain been followed up ? Remembering that it could once be written : "Neither said any that ought of the things which he possessed was his own" (Acts iv. 32), with what sorrow we read at a later day : "All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Phil. ii. 21). And yet further, when the church's shame has become her boast, we hear : "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." "I sit a queen" (Rev. iii. 17 ; xviii. 7).

Again let me ask, do we consider ourselves as exempt from this common danger ?

Ah ! beware, remember that favoured King Hezekiah, of old, who "trusted in Jehovah, God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him, for he clave to Jehovah and departed not from following Him" (2 Kings xviii. 5, 6), and Jehovah wrought wondrously for His people and their king ; but, *left to himself in one matter* (see 2 Chron. xxxii. 31), where was this favoured one ?

What occasioned Jehovah's question through the lips of His prophet: "What have they seen in thine house?" Ah! what, but the fact that a king with such a record had fallen a prey to this heinous evil—covetousness, and Jehovah and Jehovah's house were forgotten and displaced by Hezekiah's house and its contents. Mark the prophet's question; not, what have they heard, but, what have they *seen* in thine house?

The One who addresses *us* as dear children would have us know and remember, that He is interested uninterruptedly in all our doings; noting (not as a detective standing on my doorstep, but) as a Father all who cross the threshold of my dwelling, and what is spread out before their eyes inside the house. It is a day of great swelling words, but He is seeking from us a life responsive to the relationship that He Himself hath established, and no loud professions from our lips belied by the life. What have they *seen*?

Too frequently have we spoken and acted as if all the wondrous truths made known to Gentile sinners, as we were, were merely to find their expression in our coming together; whereas in Eph. v., my Father tells me what He wants to be seen *in my house*, even the expression in the smallest details of life, and amid all its chafing, of that great mystery, "Christ and the Church." "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church."

**HEZEKIAH.**

“In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, saying, I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.”—(2 Kings xx. 1-3.)

**HEZEKIAH'S HOUSE.**

“And Hezekiah heard them, and showed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious oint-

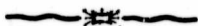
**PAUL.**

“According to my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die gain. . . . Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.” “Willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”—(Phil. i. 20, 21, 23; 2 Cor. v. 8.)

**PAUL'S HOUSE.**

“And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which

ment, and the house of concern the Lord Jesus  
 his armour, and all that Christ."—(Acts. xxviii.  
 was found in his treas- 30, 31.)  
 ures."—(2 Kings xx.  
 13.)



## THE HOURS OF THE LORD JESUS,

“In reading the Gospels I am very much struck with the way in which every hour of the time of the Lord Jesus is filled up. There is no loitering in the path of the Blessed One through this world; no seeking (like we seek) for ease: life with Him is taken up with the untiring actions of love. He lives not for Himself: God and man have all His thought and all His care. If He seeks for solitude, it is to be alone with His Father. Does He seek for society: it is to be about His Father's business. By night or by day He is always the same. On the Mount of Olives, praying: in the temple, teaching: in the midst of sorrow, comforting: or where sickness is, healing: every act declares Him to be One who lives for others. He has a joy in God man cannot understand; a care for man that only God could show. You never find Him acting for Himself. If hungry in the wilderness He works no miracle to supply His own need, but if others are hungering around Him, the compassions of His heart flow forth, and He feeds them by thousands.”

## THE INVISIBLE.

“The Lord has ways of weaning us from the visible and tangible, and bringing us to live upon the invisible and real. God blows out our candles, and makes us find our light in Him, to prepare us for that place in which they need no candle, for the glory of God is their light ; and where, strange to tell, they have no temple, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof. Oh that God would gradually lift us up above all the outward, above all the visible, and bring us more into the inward and unseen ! If you do not know anything about this, ask the Lord to teach you this riddle ; and if you do know it, ask Him to keep you to the life and walk of faith, and never may you be tempted to quit it for the way of sight and feeling.”

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## SERVICE AND COMMUNION.

“...In connection with your work, dear brother, seek the Lord's face, and lean on Him. When the body is not robust, one is in danger of doing it as a task, as an obligation, and the spirit becomes a little legal ; or one yields to weariness, and is discouraged before God. Work is a favour which is granted us. Be quite peaceful and happy in the sense of grace ; then go and pour out that peace to souls. This is true service, from which one returns very weary, it may be, in body, but sustained and happy ; one rests beneath God's

wings, and takes up the service again till the true rest comes. Our strength *is renewed* like the eagle's. Ever remember, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength is made perfect in weakness.' May communion with God be your chief concern, and the sweet relationships in which we are placed with Him. All is well when we walk in them; then we discern and judge everything day by day, which hinders communion, and so the heart does not become hard nor the conscience blunted, and we really enjoy those communications of grace which give strength. Yes, seek above all personal communion with the Lord."

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### EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

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"I see in my late affliction no defeat from Satan in anywise. Contrary to that, I had been asking the Lord, and earnestly, for more practical separateness to Christ in heaven for myself and His people. And in taking from me to Himself her whom He had given me as a companion, and an ensample of unearthliness, I fancy I can see a lesson quite in harmony with the Father's love and ways. *So far as I walk in heaven I am not bereaved*; it is only when walking apart from the glory of Christ,—or when the weakness of the earthen vessel is in question, that there is a void and a vacuum for me to bring Christ in to fill. But He guides me afresh, and will lead me Himself whither He wills."

## MEDITATIONS ON THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

(Continued from Vol. 4, page 236.)

### *Abimelech, or The Usurpation of Authority.*

(Chap. ix.)

This chapter introduces us to such a sorrowful phase of declension, that, at first sight, it does not seem to contain a single refuge for faith. In chap. viii, we have seen the congregation of Israel wishing to confer authority on their leader; here, a wolf usurps the Shepherd's place, and seizes upon the flock in order to devour it. It is the arbitrary authority of the evil servant, who, in the absence of his lord, began to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken (Matt. xxiv. 48, 49). This briefly reminds us of the principle of clericalism in the house of God and its pernicious encroachments. The wretched Abimelech was not a judge; he sought a position still more exalted: he had himself proclaimed king (ver. 6), and took, in the midst of the people, the title assumed by those who rule over the nations. In thus openly arrogating to himself this title (ver. 2), he acted in the opposite way to a judge who had been raised up of God (c. f. viii. 23). In order to usurp this place, he resorted to thoroughly human expedients. Through the brothers of his mother, the concubine of Gideon, he beguiled the men of Shechem under the guise of fraternity. They placed confidence in this traitor; their moral state was



so low, that they even forgot the bond that united them to all Israel, and said of Abimelech: "He is *our* brother." Fraternity had lost, for them, its true meaning, and had come to be a name characterizing only a party.

The influence of this man was sustained by treasure taken from the house of a false god. The usurper appealed to the pockets of the people, and did not despise the unholy source from which the money came. This silver served to accomplish the devil's work. Baal's treasure took the place of Jehovah's power, and furnished the usurper with the means of persecuting and cutting off the posterity of faith, the family of God (ver. 5). One only, Jotham, the youngest of all Gideon's sons, a poor, insignificant creature, escaped, and succeeded in concealing himself.

Abimelech was successful; the evil spirit triumphed, but it will never be a spirit of peace among men. Intestine dissensions, treacheries, struggles for supremacy, vintages productive of drunken hilarity, drunkenness finding its vent in curses, the ambition of Gaal, the counsels of Ebed, the craft of Zebul, the violence of Abimelech—such were the disturbing elements which troubled the camp of Israel, when the testimony of God had left it. It became a scene of sorrow, of slaughter, and of hatred; but Jehovah, in His grace, caused a ray of light to shine in the midst of the darkness. *He does not leave Himself without testimony*; this we may reiterate with confidence, as we pass



through difficult times. And should there be, as here, only a single witness left for God in this world, may we be that one, that despised Jotham, the last of all, but standing steadfast for God. Preserved by the providential goodness of Jehovah, "he went and stood on the top of Mount Gerizim" (ver. 7). Moses, in the past, had decreed that six tribes should stand on Mount Ebal to curse, and six on Gerizim to bless. Joshua had remembered this when the people entered Canaan, but since then Israel had morally chosen Ebal, the place of cursing. Jotham chose Gerizim, the place of blessing, and *he stood there alone*. As God's witness, in face of the whole people, he lifted up his voice and spoke a fable in their ears, proclaiming the blessing of faith and also the consequences of the unfaithfulness of the people. Jotham is, in his own person, the representative of the blessings of the true Israel of God; as to himself, feeble and persecuted, yet able to enjoy the favour of God and testify for Him, bearing fruit to His glory.

In his recital, three trees refuse to be promoted over the other trees. They depict, according to the word, the different characteristics of Israel under the blessing of Jehovah. The *olive tree* said: "Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?" (ver. 9). Oil answers to the unction and the power of the Holy Spirit by which God and men are honoured. The Israel of God can only realize this power, when in thorough

separation from the nation's and their principles. These latter set up kings over themselves (1 Sam. viii. 5), whilst Jehovah was the sole ruler of the people when faithful. The *fig tree* said: "Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?" (ver. 11), for Israel could only bear fruit when in separation from the nations. The *vine* said: "Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?" New wine is the joy found in the mutual communion of men with God, and this enjoyment—the highest that could be desired—was lost to Israel when they adopted the spirit and ways of the nations.

What a lesson for us Christians! The world is to the church, what the nations were to Israel. If we yield to its solicitations, we abandon our oil, our fruit, our new wine—that is to say, our spiritual power, the works which God has prepared for us (Ephes. ii. 10), and the joy of communion. Oh! are we able to respond to all the offers of the world: Should I leave that which is my happiness and my strength, for fruitless turmoil, or to satisfy the lusts and ambitions of the heart of men? Jotham, like his father Gideon (viii. 23), appreciates these treasures of the Israel of God, and set himself apart on Gerizim, retaining his blessed position. In the presence of all this apostate people, he is the true and last bud of faith, the sole witness for God. What honour for the young and feeble son of Jerubbaal! Spurned by all, his lot was the

only enviable one, for he glorified God in this sorrowful world. May we too, like him, be found in the path of separation from evil. There we shall taste all that the trees of God yield. He who has enjoyed these things exclaims: "Should I leave them?"

When Jotham had shown the people their folly, and foretold their judgment, he ran away and fled (ver. 21). He left the congregation of Israel, abandoning it to the chastisement which was already at the door. He went to Beer and dwelt there: "That is the well whereof Jehovah spake unto Moses, 'Gather the people together, and I will give them water,'" and which Israel celebrated in a song (Num. xxi. 16-18). Thus it is, that the faithful witnesses, in the midst of Christendom already ripe for judgment, withdraw to Beer, the true gathering point, where is the fountain of living water (c. f. Jer. ii. 13), the place also of songs and praises.

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*Tola and Jair.*

(Chap. x. 1-5.)

The beginning of this chapter gives us a brief sketch of the history of two judges in Israel—Tola and Jair—both eminent men. The first was renowned for his descent, his ancestors being mentioned in Genesis amongst the sons of Israel who went down into Egypt—namely, Tola and Puah among the sons of Issachar (Gen. xlvi. 13; 1 Chron. viii. 1). The second was conspicuous for

his wealth, the number of his sons, his prosperity (c. f. chap. v. 10), and his cities. But, strange to say, nothing else is added. Their rule continued for nearly the same length of time. God made use of them, qualifying even Tola "to save Israel" by (Rev. Ver.), but He did not glorify Himself by them in any special way. This reminds us of 1 Cor. i. 26-29; "Not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things, which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in His presence." God uses, in preference, weak vessels, and that is the reason why so many of the judges bear, in one way or another, the stamp of weakness. On the other hand, all the value of God's instruments consists in presenting the character of Christ. How difficult it would be for a man who was powerful, noble or rich, to reflect the traits of Him who, when here below, was found in the place of weakness, humiliation and poverty, that He might bring the grace of God to us. The judges who preceded them, being neither Tolas nor Jairs, were examples of humility, of forgetfulness of self, esteeming others better than themselves; and who, having nothing to lose, gave proof of spiritual energy which nothing could arrest and whose very weakness achieved a victory.

*(To be continued, D.V.)*