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Facts About The Resurrection

By
J. M. McCALEB

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FACTS ABOUT THE RESURRECTION

(Delivered at Cornell Ave., Chicago, Ill., Nov. 7, 1937.)

As far as I know there is no religion that teaches the resurrection of the body save the Christian religion; but all religions teach the existence of the soul after death.

According to the Bible there are some that escape the grave. Enoch and Elijah were taken directly to heaven. At the coming of the Lord the saints then living will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and meet the Lord together with the righteous who are raised from the grave.

Lazarus, the widow's son, some others, and those that came forth from the grave at the resurrection of Jesus were brought back to their natural lives. It seems these will be raised again to their eternal destinies at the coming of Christ.

This brings us to the consideration of the final resurrection. There are some scriptures, in reference to this resurrection, which mention the resurrection of the righteous only. In I. Thess. 4:16-17 Paul says, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Neither in this quotation nor in the entire paragraph is there any reference made to the resurrection of the wicked. A distinction is being made here between the **dead** in Christ who will be raised from the grave, and the **living** in Christ who will be changed. (There are other passages, however, which show beyond question that at this time the wicked will also be raised.) Also, in the entire fifteenth chapter of I. Corinthians no reference is made to the resurrection of the wicked. As in I. Thess. 4:16-17 Paul has in mind only the righteous. And the righteous, he says, will be raised at the "last trump." If the righteous are to be raised at the "last trump" (I. Cor. 15:52) this could hardly mean more than a thousand years before the last trump.

On this point Paul is in accord with the teaching of Jesus in the sixth chapter of John. "And this is the will of him that sent me, that of all that which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day." (v. 39) "For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on Him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last-day." (v. 40) "No man can come unto me, except the Father that sent me draw him; and I will raise him up in the last day." (v. 44) "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up in the last day." (v. 54) In all of these passages Jesus is speaking of the righteous only and four times he says he will raise up such "at the last day." It is hard to conceive of language that would make it plainer that the righteous dead will be raised at the "last trump" or "the last day." That they will be raised more than a thousand years before the "last day" or the "last trump" seems, therefore, out of the question.

In the scriptures thus far considered no reference is made either to the resurrection of the wicked or to the judgment of the dead. It is often the case that though one phase of a subject is mentioned others are included. For example, repentance is the only condition for the remission of sins mentioned in Luke 24:47, but all of the other conditions must be understood as being included; so in regard to the resurrection, all connected with it must be understood as being included. That there will be one resurrection and one judgment for the wicked and the righteous is seen in the following passages: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Dan. 12:2. It is true that this passage is not quite definite enough to be absolutely conclusive that there will be just one resurrection, but the natural import of the language is to that effect. Jesus makes it certain in John 5:28 where he says, "Marvel not at this, for the hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judg-

ment." "The hour" means just one hour and in this one hour **all** that are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth. This includes all that have "done good" and all that have "done evil." In Acts 24:15 Paul before Felix declares his belief "that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust." "A resurrection" means one resurrection. It includes both the just and the unjust. Again in II. Cor. 5:10 the apostle declares that "we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad." This is so specific and plain that comment cannot improve upon it. Also, Rev. 20:11-15 teaches the same.

In this same chapter, verse 6, a "first resurrection" is mentioned, and we naturally want to know what it means. There are some passages in the scriptures that we cannot be sure just what they mean and this is one of them. We should not make a guess at such passages, however, and then try to make those which are plain fit the guess. If we guess at all the guess should be in harmony with the general tenor of the scriptures and especially with those scriptures that are unquestioned. My guess on Rev. 20:6 is that it means the resurrection of baptism. One thing we know and that is that baptism is often spoken of as a resurrection and it comes before the bodily resurrection from the grave, and over such the "second death hath no power."

Before closing this article there is one more passage to which I desire to call special attention. In Matt. 25:31-46 Jesus pictures the final judgment. Some claim, however, that this is a judgment which will take place at the beginning of the much-talked-of millenium. That there can be no thousand years reign of peace on this earth after this event, be it what it may, will be manifest when the facts are disclosed. First, all nations will be there, (v. 32); second, they will be separated into just two companies, (v. 32); third, the wicked will go away into eternal punishment; and the righteous into eternal life, (v. 46). Then, not a soul will be left on this earth.

None will be left over whom to rule, and none left to rule over them. If, then, there is ever to be a reign of peace on this earth it must be before the coming of our Lord, for at that time the earth will be so completely depopulated that not a soul will be left. Then the earth itself will pass away. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (II. Peter 3:10).

As to the resurrection, then, the following facts appear: It will take place at the second coming of our Lord; at that time "all that are in their graves" will be raised; the sea will give up the dead in it; all will be judged, each man according to his works; the righteous living at that time will be changed; there will be a separation into two companies; the wicked will go away into eternal punishment; and the redeemed will be in "the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." (II. Peter 3:13).

THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

It is the opinion of some, and at one time was my own, that God will yet restore the Jews to Palestine. But after a more careful study of this question, I have reached a different conclusion. My reasons for this conclusion are as follows:

1. The promises of a national restoration of Israel were all from four to eight hundred years before the first coming of Christ, but have no reference to his second coming. After his coming, and during his earthly ministry, he never once promised them he would restore the kingdom as of old. This was the expectation of the entire nation, and so strong was this desire that they actually attempted to take him by force and make him their king and leader. But his reply was in terms of the "kingdom of God", or "Kingdom of heaven," expressions always in reference to the kingdom of the new covenant, but never used in reference to the kingdom of Israel.

2. The promise to restore Israel as a nation was a restoration "from captivity." Since the Babylonian captivity has forever passed and the Jews are no more a captive people to any nation, the promise to restore them from captivity has passed. It could have taken place only at the time predicted by Jeremiah. And Jeremiah set the date as follows: "For thus saith Jehovah, After seventy years are accomplished for Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place." Jer. 29:10. This seventy years was the time to elapse from the time they were taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar in 597 and 586 B.C. Their return began in 538 B.C. Any claim now for their return is a false claim, being contrary to prophecy.

3. Nehemiah, Ezra and the other prophets all understood that with the return they were to rebuild the temple and restore the priesthood, the sacrifices and to enjoin the keeping of the Law. If such a return were to take place now all this would be included. But Christ took away the Law, nailing it to the cross. Thus to claim the return of Israel at this late date is equivalent to the old claim that certain Judizing teachers made, and which Paul so strenuously oppose, of insisting that we Christians must keep the Law.

4. All the promises to Israel, both in regard to their occupying the land at the first, and of their return from captivity were conditioned on obedience. In both cases they broke promise and cut short the blessings God wanted them to have. The conditions were always, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured by the sword." Isa. 1:19, 20. So the claim that God must make good His promise regardless of conditions is not well taken.

5. The illustrations used against Israel denote complete national destruction. (1) They were like a rotten girdle that can no longer be worn. "This evil people which refuse to hear my words . . . shall even be as this girdle which is profitable for nothing." Jer. 13-1-11. (2) They were like a vessel marred in the potter's hands.

Jer. 18:1-23. (3) As hopeless as a broken bottle that could not be mended. Jer. 19:1-15. (4) Like a forsaken vineyard that had brought forth wild grapes, "My well beloved had a vineyard" in a very fruitful hill: and he digged it and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also hewed out a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

And now will I tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof and it shall be eaten up; I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned nor hoed; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of Jehovah of hosts is the house of Israel, and the house of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for justice, but, behold oppression; for righteousness, but, behold a cry." Isa. 5:1-7.

All these illustrations go to show that Israel as a nation was doomed. The last illustration in particular is very striking; the hedge of God's special protection was to be taken away and the vineyard eaten up, the wall to be broken down and the vineyard trodden under foot; no rain was to fall upon it. This took place in the year 70 A.D. from which time national Israel met her eternal doom.

In Matt. 21:33-45 Jesus uses the same parable against the representatives of the nation and they saw it, offering a strong protest. But before they saw its application Jesus caused them to pronounce their own doom when they said, "He will miserably destroy those miserable men, and will let out the vineyard to other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruits in their season." Having led them to commit themselves on the parable, Jesus then in plain words said to them, "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." "The kingdom of God" refers to the kingdom of the new covenant and that, since they were

trying to preserve the Jewish kingdom by rejecting Christ, they would be rejected from the kingdom of God while the Gentiles on obedience would be accepted.

6. In Matt. 3:11, 12 John says, "I indeed baptize you in water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he shall thoroughly cleanse his threshing flood; and he will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire." The threshing-flood is Israel; the wheat are the Jews who repent; the chaff are the impenitent; the garner the kingdom of God; the chaff to be burned is the eternal punishment of the impenitent Jews. Then the "threshing-floor," or national Israel, is completely cleaned up, and as a nation there is nothing left.

7. Again in the 23rd chapter of Matthew we have Jesus' farewell speech to his people. In that memorable speech he seven times pronounces their doom by saying, "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees." Then at the close he breaks out in lamentation, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them sent unto her! How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate." Jerusalem (like Rome) stood for the nation. "House" here is the house of Israel, the nation. The house left desolate means that Israel is rejected as a nation, their doom is sealed. Their national destruction took place 37 years after this prediction of our Lord, that is in the year 70, under Titus the Roman general. God held on to a remnant till the "promised seed should come". After that he had no more special use for them as a nation. Their hedge of special protection was removed, and they were devoured; the wall broken down and they were trodden under the feet of the Gentiles. They have since been scattered among the other nations and their only hope is the hope of the individual in Christ. Peter so understood it when he said in the house of Cornelius, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter

of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable unto him. Acts 10:34. Again in conference with the brethren at Jerusalem concerning this matter he says, "But we believe that we (the Jews) shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they" (the Gentiles). Acts 15:11.

We need not, therefore, be concerned about national Israel for if by some chance they should again get back to their own land it would be no more the leading of God than the Irish Free State, or the recent independence of Egypt. What we should be interested in is to preach the gospel to them for "so all Israel shall be saved"—if saved at all.

Note:—If it were the Jews instead of the Egyptians who have again become a nation, nothing could convince some people but what the Lord's coming is now upon us and his supposed earthly reign to begin at once.

WE SHOULD BE THE MOST ZEALOUS OF ALL.

(Delivered at Cornell Ave., Chicago, Ill., Nov. 7, 1937.)

There are special reasons why the churches of Christ should be more zealous than others. Nearly a century ago when the various Protestant missionaries went to Japan the people began to ask them questions about the different names they bore. They were embarrassed to give a satisfactory answer. The Presbyterians decided that the best way out of the difficulty would be simply to drop the name and return to the name found in the New Testament. As a result, so far as the name goes, we have no Presbyterian church in Japan. The name they adopted was Nippon Kristo Kyokwai—The Church of Christ in Japan. We meet with no such difficulty since we have adopted no names outside the New Testament, as disciples, Christians, saints or, collectively, churches of Christ. It is true that we do not make very free use of the word "saint". I was taking a walk in one of the residential sections of Nashville, Tenn. not so long ago and a little boy about three years old, with a stick in

his hand, stepped out and held his stick in front of me. "Whose man are you"? he demanded. After some hesitation, I replied, "I'm God's man." As I walked on I reflected on my answer, wondering if I was worthy. But we ought so to live that all these names would be fitting and that we would not feel ashamed to use them. He that glorieth in these names can unblushingly present them to the non-Christian world as a reason for his hope.

In the second place there are those who say that the eternal decrees of God are such that the number of the elect are so fixed that they can neither be increased nor diminished; that those that are to be saved will be saved and those to be lost will be lost, and nothing man can do can change it. If I believed this I could not trouble myself about taking the gospel to those who have never heard, for if they are of the elect they will be saved anyway, and if they are not, nothing I can do can save them. But the churches of Christ believe that the non-elect are whosoever won't; while the elect are "whosoever will." We believe that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and that it hath pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. In this view of it we are again especially obligated to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

A third reason that obligates us above others is that some believe that in the end all will be saved whether they hear or not. They say it is better to believe and live a holy life now; but even though one does not, after God has meted out to such the needed amount of punishment, they will then be admitted to the land of bliss. If this were true I think I would be selfish enough to let them suffer their punishment before being acquitted. But the Bible, as we believe and teach it, is squarely against this teaching. Only the obedient will be saved while the disobedient will be lost. If only the obedient, then, will be saved, we who believe this are obligated above those who think that somehow all will be finally saved whether they believe or not.

Many believe and teach that apart from the preaching of the word of God people are saved by the direct

work of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of the unsaved. We believe and teach that people are saved by hearing the gospel, and that the Spirit, so far as we know, works only through the Word in saving people. And since the proclamation of the gospel is solely in the hands of human beings, we are under special obligation above others; for if the Spirit of God can and does work on the hearts of people to save and to sanctify them by means of prayer, as some believe, then they are more to be excused for staying at home than we. Strange to say, however, that such people, in their missionary activities, are ahead of us. They live above their doctrine; we fall below ours.

My final reason for saying that we are obligated above others is that we still claim to believe the Bible—all of it. When I went to Japan almost half a century ago, some of the Protestant missionaries were already on the ground. Naturally we exchanged views in regard to what each believed. We found that we differed on several things; but in those days our final appeal was to the Bible. We might differ as to what it meant, but we did not differ that it was a finality in all matters of difference. It is not so now. The Bible, with many, is no longer and end of all controversy, no longer a final appeal. Many who go as missionaries go without a message. What are called our higher institutions of learning have robbed them of their message. They are like the delivery boy who was asked to deliver some packages. He was urged to go quick. In his haste he forgot to put the packages in the basket, so when he got there his basket was empty. Many go today with an empty basket. They content themselves by preaching a present-day gospel—a social gospel. A present-day gospel, a social gospel are a part of the message but not all. Japan has people employed to preach and to practice these things. We still believe and teach that the unseen things of the future are the real things which shall abide, while the things that are seen, the material things, are of short duration. This being true we are again obligated above others to hasten to the lost with the message of salvation. Let the following lines be the sentiment of every Christian heart:

“Nor shall this spreading gospel rest
Till through the earth its truth shall run
Till every nation shall be blessed
Who sees the light or feels the sun.”

THE GOLDEN AGE OF ISAIAH

(Delivered at Cornell Ave. Church, Chicago, Ill., Oct. 24, 1937.)

“And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah’s house shall be established on top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, “Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” Isa. 2:2-4. Mountains stand for kingdoms, and the “Lord’s house” means the Kingdom of God. So the plain meaning of this passage is: In the latter days, or last days (A.V.) of the Jewish dispensation the church of God will be established and it will be superior to all other kingdoms.

In Isa. 11:1-9 the same age of peace is set forth under different imagery. Here a branch shall spring forth from an old stump and bear fruit, but the next sentence says, “and the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him,” which shows that it could not have been a natural branch. Under his righteous judgment even the ravenous beasts are represented as being changed in nature. There will be no more desire on the part of the lion to eat the calf, than the calf to eat the lion; no more desire for the wolf to eat the lamb than the lamb to eat the wolf; no more desire for the leopard to eat the kid than the kid the leopard, and even the snakes will have their nature changed. The quotation closes by saying, “They shall not

hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters that cover the sea." The expressions, "holy mountain" which means the church, and, "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah," go to show that he is talking of human beings. Of course the "branch that bears fruit" is Christ. In the New Testament it is explained as to who these ravenous beasts are. Jesus called them "serpents", "wolves in sheeps' clothing"; John calls them a "generation of vipers"; Peter speaks of them as "a roaring lion going about seeking whom they may devour". Paul was one of these roaring lions till Christ changed him into a lamb.

Again in the 35th chapter of Isaiah we have a picture of the same golden age. Here nature is represented as bursting forth into bloom and song, and the desert into springs of water. A highway stretches across the land called a "way of holiness." "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast go up thereon; they shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there; and the ransomed of Jehovah shall return and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Again this highway is mentioned in Isa. 40:3-5. John the Baptist quotes this in Luke 3:4-6, and shows that it refers to the Christian way under the rule of Christ.

We come across this same period again in Jer. 31:31-34 where he drops the imagery and speaks plainly of a "new covenant" under different conditions. Under the Old a child was born into it by natural birth, was circumcised the eighth day as a sign of being in that covenant, then afterwards taught to know the Lord. But under the New they must first know the Lord as a condition of entering the covenant relation. Paul quotes this in Heb. 8:7-13 and shows it to mean the present dispensation.

In all these passages there are links that bind them together and to the age in which we are now living, and which began at Pentecost. For instance it says, "For

out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." These two expressions mean the same thing. Referring to Pentecost Jesus said to the disciples, "But ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." Acts 1:8. Again, on the resurrection day at even when the eleven and others were gathered together, Jesus appeared in their midst and said, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem." Luke 21:46, 47. It was to begin in Jerusalem, then, and after the Holy Spirit had come upon them. This fixes both the time and place for Isaiah's Golden Age to begin.

Has such a time ever come upon this earth? Not to the full. But the only reason why it has not, is because man has not been willing to have it so. God has done all he ever will or can do to bring about such a condition among men that war shall cease and all be subject to the Prince of Peace. But he has never forced man to be obedient, and, judging the future by the past, he never will. He has always gone on the principle, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword." Isa. 1:19, 20. It should be noted, too, that even those who claim that there will be a personal reign of Christ on earth for a thousand years after his coming, admit that there will be sinners during that time and they will greatly increase at the end. That there are sinners now, herefore, is no more objection to the reign of peace being with us now than that it will be at some future time.

We must keep in mind that Isaiah and the other prophets were picturing an ideal state, what would be if all would accept it and live up to it. The ideal has always been kept before man; but man has never reached it. This is not to mock us, but to encourage us. In spite of our weaknesses, we would not be pleased with any-

thing but a perfect standard of life, and one impartially offered to all. So, in keeping with Isaiah's ideal, Jesus and the apostles preached an ideal gospel—a universal gospel. They acted on the supposition that all ought to accept it. Not only so, but that all should live up to it. "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations," not a part of them. "Preach the gospel to the whole creation." "God sent not his Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world might be saved through him." Here is the ideal, which is universal salvation. And the Christian life is the ideal life. Again and again are we exhorted to be perfect, as perfect as the Father himself. But man has never been able to measure up to the ideal, and since society as a whole is composed of individuals, it is not likely that the perfect state that the prophets pictured and that Jesus and the apostles preached will ever be reached on this earth.

Since governments also are composed of individuals, we can hardly expect that all will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks and learn war no more. Have the governments ever in a measure, complied with Isaiah's prediction? People get so full of war talk that they are inclined to overlook some very important matters in regard to international peace measures. In 1793 the United States and Great Britain entered into what is known as the Jay Treaty. This treaty was concerning Canada and the United States boundaries, and the fortification of the great lakes. From that date till 1899 there were 150 peaceful settlements of international disputes. A number have taken place since. England has been a party to 70 of these; the United States to 60; France 20. In 1815 there was a league between the Emperors of Russia, Austria and Prussia by which they agreed to settle all political matters according to "Christian principles." Norway, Sweden and Denmark were once the most war-like people of Europe; but now they are the most peaceful. In 1900 Argentina and Chili were just ready to go to war over the boundary line on top of the Andes mountains. A Catholic priest became a mediator and succeeded in getting both countries to

settle the boundary by arbitration. They melted some of the very cannon with which they intended to destroy each other, into a statue of Christ and erected it on the boundary and today it stands there as "The Christ of the Andese." On its base is inscribed a statement that so long as these mountains shall stand so shall peace be between these nations.

The means by which the Golden Age is to be ushered in is given in the same text of Isa. 2:2-4. "And many peoples shall go and say, "Come ye, let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths." This is the gospel invitation in prophecy. Jesus said, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Every Christian must also engage in the call. "Let him that heareth say, Come." Note the expression, "many peoples." Peoplēs is in the plural number. There are many in all lands today saying "Come ye." The reason why the results are not greater than they are and the whole world is not evangelized and many more saved is because not enough are engaged in the invitation. If all Christians were aroused to their duty, in the home, in the church, in our schools and in business it is hard even to imagine what the results would be. Even as it is the influence of God's people in the world is far greater than many seem to think. Were it not for the influence of Christ on human society life would be intolerable. And if all who claim to be Christian would indeed live the life, war would be impossible.

Then let us not vainly look forward to a future time when in some mysterious manner Christ will in some way force man into obedience; but rather let us be up and doing, rejoicing that God has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light; let every Christian know that he is already living in the Golden Age, and if he is not, it is only because he is not living up to his privileges. He who lives by the golden rule is surely in the golden age.

J. M. McCaleb.