

THE BIBLICAL EDUCATOR

"To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding" Proverbs 1:2

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THE CHRISTIAN THINKER AS TEACHER AN INTRODUCTION

By David Robinson

A discovery has been made. In case you hadn't noticed, a bit of a commotion has been taking place over the last few decades among some Christian educators, who found that if they were going to claim to educate "Christianly," that they had better have some notion as to what that involved. Not that this breakthrough was greeted by universal acclaim—indeed, many remain totally ignorant to this day of the existence of such a proposition, some have misunderstood or stereotyped it, while others have damned it with faint praise. In spite of this, the challenge remains.

This challenge is known by several different aliases, but perhaps the most common term is "integration," having in this case the rather specialized meaning of the synthesis of revealed truth with curricular content and classroom practice. One might possibly question the adequacy of the word in the light of its ambiguous shades of connotation, but the search for an alternative is a challenge of a different sort, and we may adopt the word as long as we are aware of its shortcomings. Within the last twenty years or so, large numbers of books and articles have been produced on the subject, learned lectures have been given, seminars have been held, formal and informal faculty sessions have transpired, all for the purpose of examining what should or should not be done.

Now this is all to the good. Contrary to the opinions of some, I believe that the events known as Calvary and Pentecost should have a continuing impact on what we think, and how we think. We should think differently, because we are different. This is hardly an earth-shaking revelation of recent manufacture: The world has traveled an impressive distance since God first instructed man on the implications of regeneration. Our concern is therefore most appropriate, but brings with it a question that I find somewhat disturbing. Realizing the relatively recent advent of Christian education in its present form, conceding the immense scope of the task, and allowing that saints will be saints, I am yet curious. Pentecost was long ago. Why are we still struggling with such basic issues at such elementary levels?

It is tempting to suggest that the issue is merely a question of method. "Yes, yes, of course," you say, "but how do I go about it?" I am not so sure. "How" is really a rather advanced question if you think about it. I generally ask "how?" only if I have passed that threshold in my mind leading to at least tentative acceptance of that which I am considering. I do not believe that "how?" is a question that many Christian educators have attained to as of yet. There are other dragons to consider first.

One is the unfortunate tendency of the saints to forget that Adam was a thinker, in addition to his many other talents, that the gift of thought fell with Adam, and that when one is regenerated, the mind is regenerated also, with crucial implications for education. In other words, we neglect to think about thinking, which makes thinking the thoughts of God after Him rather difficult. We seem to trample underfoot the mind of Christ.

Another aspect of our difficulty would appear to lie in the fact that when we do think about thinking, we don't do it for very long, or with much consistency. We may apply ourselves diligently to other critical causes, such as fluoridation of water, or school prayer, or banning this or that dirty book, or, the Lord preserve us, what kind of music goes on at

church; indeed, we are apparently becoming very proficient at involvement with vitally peripheral issues. In time, we shall no doubt concentrate more and more attention on increasingly trivial distractions, until at last we shall have conclusively established ourselves as little more than trivial distractions. Perhaps we believe that profundity is not a particularly useful quality, at least in thought. After all, wasn't Jesus a *simple* carpenter?

We suffer from yet another problem. This problem too wears many guises, but put most plainly, we don't talk to each other much about very much. Now this is not very surprising, really. Words and thoughts dwell in dynamic union in human beings. If our concerns and our gaze have become trivialized and pedestrian, our conversation will reflect this. In the day to day press of the routine and mundane, it is tempting to discard such "luxuries" as intellectual reflection and communion with one another, in favor of a less committal and time-consuming way of life. We will be the poorer for this, though we might refuse to admit it, or, even worse, might not even realize our poverty, having never desired what we lack. In short, the *shekinah* might depart, to general apathy. The consequences of such callousness anywhere have always been tragic. They are doubly so among the teachers of the flock—for aside from the teachers, there is the flock, you see.

Finally, there is a tragic tendency among Christians to "discover" long since discovered truth, still warm from the previous discovery. We are, therefore, through our own ignorance and sloth, victims of the reinvented wheel. This malady appears rather regularly (some would say depressingly so), and springs predictably from our previous considerations. A community of believers which does not worship from strong and practiced minds, which defiles and denigrates the act of intellectual interplay, and which elevates ignorance and mediocrity to pious virtue, is a community which will be a constant victim of the reinvented wheel. Every few years or so, someone will suddenly exclaim "Eureka!" and proceed to outline how important this or that new idea is, or wouldn't it be great, and yes, that sounds wonderful, and I never thought of that, and somebody should do something—I occasionally wonder how many generations of Christians have passed in infrequently ruffled tranquility, beholding the second, third and fourth coming of the reincarnate wheel.

Now if all of this seems somewhat far afield from the stumbling block of "integration," I can only say that it is necessary to understand something about the tar baby before one goes about tackling it. Many of the tribulations that are faced in this area originate in our unwillingness to be thoughtful and aware—of what is, what has been, and what could be. I might not have to wrestle the tar baby if he has already been vanquished.

Assuming now that we recognize that we "new creations" have some sort of responsibility to use thoughts and words in a manner reflective of our new image, and that we vaguely agree that this is something that may involve much more effort than we expected, but is essential and exciting in the light of Pentecost—what then of the classroom and Christian thought? This is, of course, a vast question, which I will not pretend to cover in any sort of comprehensive fashion. Instead, I would like to grapple with some crucial consideration in a series of essays which will touch upon possibilities that I must confess that I find fascinating. History and the Social Studies/Humanities are my particular garden of delight, and shall provide a rough framework for some thoughts on the nature of what we should be doing in the classroom, how to go about accomplishing this (now that we are perhaps more ready for the "how"), as well as a few notable serpents to be avoided or slain.

AN EDUCATIONAL COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLE

By Rodney N. Kirby

#10 "Genesis and Ancient History, Part 2"

Text — Genesis 5, 11

Last month, we began showing the necessity for Christian history teachers to reconstruct their subject matter on the foundation of Scripture. We saw how Genesis 4 teaches many things about ancient history which go contrary to the generally accepted (evolutionary) view of history.

This month, we turn to Genesis 5 and 11 to see another aspect of ancient history. Having dismissed evolution as being unbiblical, the Christian teacher will also dismiss the dating scheme of the evolutionists. There will simply be no need for the billions of years required by evolution. So that brings up the question, "How old is the world?"

The Institute for Creation Research and other creationist organizations have done much helpful work in this area. They have shown how the dating methods used by evolutionists are based on faulty assumptions. They have also shown that other dating methods point to a young earth. The Christian teacher, particularly teachers of history, geology, and archaeology, must not ignore the work of these scholars.

While this work is invaluable, it must nevertheless be kept in its place. Creationist scientific findings are based on untested, non-scientific assumptions the same as are evolutionary dating methods. In a sense, the evidence for a young earth is no more "scientific" than that for an old earth. The validity of evidence is dependent upon one's religious presuppositions. Neither position is neutral. As Christians, our presupposition is the truthfulness of God's Word. We do not use science to show the truth of Scripture; rather, we use Scripture to show the truth of any particular scientific finding. Thus, to know which of the many dating methods are most accurate, we must know what Scripture teaches about the age of the earth.

Genesis 5 and 11 would seem to furnish us with the data needed to calculate the age of the earth. We are given the number of years from one generation to the next, from Adam to Abraham. Other Biblical data help us to locate Abraham chronologically, and so it is a simple matter of counting backwards from Abraham to find the age of the earth. For further reference, see Martin Anstey, *Chronology of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1973).

However, many Christians object to such a procedure. They say that it is illegitimate to use Genesis 5 and 11 to construct a chronology, for that is not the purpose of these chapters. The purpose is, rather, to show God's faithfulness in guarding the Messianic line; to show the fulfillment of Gen. 2:17 by repeating "and he died;" and to show by the shorter lifespans after the flood "the tightening grip of the Edenic curse upon the human body" (John C. Whitcomb, Jr. and Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Flood*; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1961; p. 477). Whitcomb and Morris devote an appendix in this book to this very question, and list eight objections to the position we are presenting. We will deal with a few of these.

First, the idea that chronology is not "the purpose" of these chapters has no weight. Whitcomb and Morris give five purposes; this does not, however, eliminate the possibility of a sixth—the construction of a chronology. In one sense, Scripture does have only one purpose—to make the man of God "perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:17). However, the preceding verse lists four "sub-purposes" of Scripture—doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. Scripture is like a many-faceted jewel—we may look at it in many different lights to gain different insights, to equip us for every good work. Thus, although the overall purpose of Moses in including chapters 5 and 11 in Genesis may not have been to present a chronology, we are not hindered thereby from making such an application. The presence of "irrelevant information" (Whitcomb and Morris, p. 476f.), the fact that chapters 5 and 11 are symmetrical (p. 475f.), and the fact that the number of years are not totalled by Moses (p. 474f.) are thus irrelevant objections.

The objection that "the postdiluvian patriarchs could not have been contemporaries of Abram" (p. 477f.) is merely an unfounded assumption, as is the notion that there must have been many centuries between the tower of Babel and Abram (p. 478f.). It is also mentioned that the term "begat" sometimes refers to ancestral relationships (p. 481-483). Whitcomb does give examples of such usage elsewhere; we do not question this. But this does not mean we are warranted in reading Gen. 5 and 11 this way, without other evidence (Biblical evidence, that is). Besides, even if the relationship between say, Seth and Enosh (Gen. 5:6) spans a missing generation or two, it still is the case that Seth was 105 years old at the birth of Enosh, whether he was his son, grandson, or great-grandson. If not, the Biblical record is false here. Also, the parallel with other Biblical genealogies breaks down. Other genealogies do not have the age at the birth of the next generation given, as we have here (X lived Y years, and begat). Contrast chapters 5 and 11 with, say, Gen. 10. The fact that the ages are given makes this record distinct from the others, and we must take care when we draw parallels with other accounts.

The only truly substantive objection comes by way of Luke 3:36, where "Cainan" appears after Arphaxad and before Salah (cf. Gen. 11:12). This could indicate a missing generation, thus implying other missing generations elsewhere. Also, there is hardly time to insert Cainan into Gen. 11:12 without stretching the time, for Arphaxad would then be 35 at the birth of his grandson Salah—a fact which, while conceivable, is not likely.

There are two possible ways to look at this. First, perhaps there should be an additional generation inserted here, based on Luke 3:36. This, however, does not necessitate discarding the whole chronological scheme of Gen. 5 and 11. We are only warranted in inserting a "missing link" where we have other Biblical evidence. This is what is done with regard to the other genealogies; we do not go around finding gaps everywhere we would like one, but note gaps only on the basis of other Biblical evidence. This is the *only* place in Gen. 5 and 11 where such a "missing link" might be indicated. This would add only about 30-35 years to the total (based on the average age of childbearing in the context).

Second, Luke, writing in a Greek context, would most likely have used the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, as his source. The Septuagint does have the name of Cainan in Gen. 11:12. Thus, Luke was merely reflecting the Septuagint of his day, not the Hebrew text (no reliable Hebrew texts include Cainan).

Whatever the answer to this question may be, as said above, it does not allow the addition of a significant amount of time to the chronology. It is possible for the Christian teacher to construct an ancient chronology with a high degree of accuracy, whether he places the Creation at 4004 B.C. (with Ussher), or, as others have calculated it, at 4042 B.C. or 3960 B.C., or somewhere in that vicinity. This places a backward time limit on all other historical investigation. This also will locate the Flood (with its resultant geological activity) in time. The teacher must thus reconstruct ancient history within these parameters (following the example of Donovan Courville's *The Exodus Problem*, mentioned last month).

BOOK REVIEW

By David H. Chilton

The World in the Grip of an Idea, by Clarence B. Carson (Arlington House, 333 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06880). 312 pp., \$14.95.

Clarence Carson's latest book is aptly titled. *The Idea*, of course, is that which has generated socialism, although several of its variations as noted in the book are not generally associated with socialism. Carson is both an independent thinker and a good student of history: the combination produces an absorbing (I almost said *gripping*) account of collectivism, and leads to a few surprising conclusions as well. The author's purpose, however, is not strictly to deal with the Idea, but with its grip on the world, illustrating his theme with an in-depth evaluation of socialist policies and practices from Karl Marx to the present.

Carson observes that the Idea has three prongs: (1) Concentrating all efforts toward the goal of a preconceived notion of "human felicity"; (2)

Destroying or altering everything in the culture which may obstruct this concerted effort; and (3) Using governmental coercion to achieve these goals. Obviously, this considerably broadens the field of inquiry from a narrowly conceived concept of communism or socialism. There are many varieties of the Idea's outworking, but all are spawned from the notion that all human activity should be directed by government to attain certain social goals, and that our received culture should be uprooted to conform to these goals. As Marx wrote: "The alteration of men on a mass scale is necessary"; men must rid themselves "of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew."

Carson distinguishes *revolutionary* socialism (e.g., communism and fascism) from *evolutionary* socialism (e.g., Fabianism and 20th-century liberalism). Revolutionary socialism, he argues, is not so much a system of thought as "an anti-religious religion," an "anti-Christian christianity" (pp. 21f.): religious imagery and symbol impregnated and transformed by Marxist content. Marxist rhetoric is often the veriest nonsense, but its appeal lies in its summons to an irrational leap of faith, offering an escape from the struggles of history through institutionalized envy.

One of the seeming enigmas of Marxism is its theoretical repudiation of government on the one hand, and its actual totalitarianism on the other. Marxists cannot, of course, simply abolish government once they come to power, particularly since their ideology can be imposed only by coercion. No government, in Marxist theory, is legitimate: hence Marxist rulers cannot be described simply as dictators, in the historical sense of that term. Rather, they must be seen as "gangsters tied to Marxist ideology," following a pattern "of secrecy, terror, purges, rulers surrounded by henchmen, of expropriation (theft), of violence, and of fear... A communist regime attempts to establish its legitimacy by its adherence to Marxism. The more gangster-like the rulers are the more fanatically they proclaim their Marxism... Marxism cannot legitimize their government, or any government, but it does legitimize, for them, their gangster-like rule" (p. 46f.). The violent seizure of power by Lenin and the continuing Soviet reign of terror are described at length: the dismantling of the family structure, the ruin of the Russian culture and economy, the control of churches, the killing and enslaving of millions, and politicization of all life and thought. Terror, it must be conceded, can produce a "stable" society; but it is the stability of the grave.

A cherished myth of the last 50 years has been the alleged contrast between communism and fascism. Fascism, we often hear, is the antithesis of socialism, being the ultimate in right-wing capitalism. "On the contrary," writes Carson, "fascism was a species of socialism, revolutionary socialism even, bearing the closest resemblance of all to Marxism-Leninism" (p. 109). Nazi ideology was every whit as collectivist as communism; the difference was that, in distinction to communism's international emphasis, Nazism claimed to be a *national* socialism, working above all for the unification of the German people. Aside from this, the principles and tactics of the avowed enemies are virtually the same: they are "parallel systems spun from essentially the same ideological materials" (p. 155). Both hold to the "command system" of economics in opposition to the private property, free enterprise order. Both communism and fascism, therefore, are totalitarian, terrorist regimes, controlling the means of production, imputing all ills to the chosen scapegoat (e.g., capitalists or Jews, as necessity may require). Hans Sennholz once stated the distinction this way: "In Russia, all owners were shot. In Germany, all owners who *disobeyed* were shot." World War II was fundamentally, as Carson contends, "a socialist conflagration," a contest between the communist and fascist brands of revolutionary socialism for European supremacy. This struggle for political dominance, and no ideology as such, was the basis for the Nazi-Soviet antagonism. The war ended with the defeat of the Nazi flavor, but the grip of the Idea upon the world was strengthened. The destruction of Nazism accomplished little more than the triumph of communism throughout much of Europe. World War II was a socialist family squabble—of immense proportions and horrifying consequences, certainly—but a family affair nonetheless.

The Idea is not always manifested in revolutionary garb. It has

another, seemingly less virulent side in *evolutionary* socialism, or *gradualism*: the piecemeal, progressive attainment of the socialist ideal, wherein the capitalist structure is not to be violently overthrown, but transformed by gradual intervention. Carson examines the growth of gradualism by turning his attention to its birth in 19th-century England, with the rejection of Victorian and Whig political theories. The literary leaders of the new movement were men such as Charles Dickens, Thomas Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, and John Ruskin. The plight of the poor, according to them, was to be redressed through recourse to the Benevolent State. Ruskin's solution to society's evils was for the state to see its "first duty... that every child born therein shall be well housed, clothed, fed and educated... the government must have an authority over the people of which we do not so much as dream" (p. 207). The most influential group begotten by gradualism was the Fabian Society, which boasted a large number of prominent intellectuals among its ranks. Their usual tactic was "permeation," the insinuation of their members into as many social, religious and political organizations as possible. From these various platforms they advocated any and all types of statist intervention: poor laws, a minimum wage, government ownership of business, and countless other socialist policies. Marx's vision of the Workers' Paradise was the goal, but it was to be effected not all at once by revolution, but inch-by-inch, in the gradual and eclectic implementation of socialist programs. With the close of the Second World War, the Welfare State was instituted on a massive scale: national insurance and health services, and the nationalization or stringent control of every aspect of the British economy. Complete social planning was carried out; everything was regulated, and the citizens were made dependent upon the state for the entirety of life. The once free and prosperous commonwealth was directed, ordered, commanded, prescribed for, imposed upon, and strangled. As Ludwig von Mises repeatedly showed, a socialist society has no means of economic calculation: without the market mechanism of profit and loss, the Director has no way to tell where energy and capital should be directed. Surpluses and shortages become the norm, and unanticipated (and thus unplanned-for) events—unusual weather, for instance—produce catastrophes as a matter of course. Famine is a commonplace of socialist states. The "controlled" economy is in fact controlled not by the planners, but by vicissitude. It is at the mercy of its environment—which is to say the mercy of *God*, our ultimate Environment, at whose hands a deified state may expect little mercy.

Carson's next example of evolutionary socialism is Sweden, which in several respects is markedly different from England's version of the Welfare State. Instead of placing the usual *restrictions* on the investment of private capital, Sweden penalizes those companies which fail to invest on schedule! (Arthur Laffer wasn't the first to think of "supply-side" economics.) The result has proved somewhat more beneficial than that achieved by Great Britain. Whatever prosperity there is in Sweden comes from the fact that industry is privately owned—which is not to say that it is *free*. Sweden is the "paternal state" par excellence: the state pays women to bear children, subsidizes housing—and special care in this regard is given unwed mothers—provides child support to all, and naturally, grants children "free" education, dental care and psychological treatment. And that's just the beginning. There are such government benefits available as free health care, rent subsidies, home loans, home *furnishing* loans, and so on. There's a catch, of course. My three-year-old repeats a familiar maxim every evening as part of his catechism recitation: There's No Such Thing As A Free Lunch. The Swedes are taxed enormously, both directly (perhaps 50% for an average worker) and by inflation. Even more severe has been the "human" cost, in the loss of meaning. The family has disintegrated with the growth of the paternal state, which seeks to provide "perpetual childhood for the citizenry" (p. 296). Religious and cultural values have been systematically uprooted. The chief end of government policy has been to annihilate all ties and loyalties to anything other than the state. Thus, for all the government's encouragement of child-bearing, the Swedish population is suffering an extraordinarily low birth rate. "The

bearing of children has its ultimate meaning within the framework of extended family, community, and moral and spiritual overtones...socialists in devising the paternal state have tampered with and put away the framework of bearing and nurturing of children and the purpose of the family...the paternal state substitutes a cold and impersonal mechanism for the warmth that arises from the freedom and responsibility of normal human action" (p. 296).

Gradualism has held sway, as we all know, in the United States as well. Far from being the bastion of free enterprise, it has become a haven for the Idea: "enterprise is being stifled, choked, throttled, limited, and restrained in America, and...there is a well established trend in this direction" (p. 314). Federal, state, and local government restrictions are legion, in business, transportation, education, health, recreation, land use, and so on. "The man who enters business discovers rather soon...that he has a Senior Partner—government" (p. 323). The dominance of the Senior Partner is so pervasive, in fact, that business is used as an instrument of political power: "Much of the force of government power reaches the individual today indirectly by way of his employer and the other business and financial institutions with which he is involved" (p. 339). A major aspect of this situation is the empowering of businesses to collect taxes. Beyond this, there is the enforcement of governmental philosophy in employment and labor, in health and safety, in finance and construction, and other areas. The entangling of state and enterprise is so considerable that "many businesses have taken on the character of government" (p. 342). Coercion has become a means of profit-making; much of business activity has shifted from *service to extortion*. The determinant in economics is no longer economic, but political. Biblically, government must be restrained and checked from abuses of its rightful coercive authority. In our country the reverse has happened. State power has intruded itself into every part of American life. And in making business an agency of government, evolutionary socialism has reached the zenith of absolutism. "No better prescription for tyranny could be written" (p. 349).

But the influence of the Idea on American life has been ever more pernicious. The market's freedom, after all, is not isolated, but intricately woven with a culture's responsibility under the rule of law. Where society is enslaved to sin and bureaucrats, the market is in bondage as well. An *obedient* people will also be *free*—no dictator will long retain control if a nation is godly; no form of slavery, no matter how seemingly beneficial, will be accepted by a society which has been emancipated by the gospel. Thus, an insidious alteration of cultural values is necessary for the real success of the Idea in American life. This has largely been the task of the media (which Carson dubs "the Transformation Industry"). Transformation is accomplished through presenting perversion as the norm: even the "good guys" on television are godless, autonomous rebels.

When I was a youth pastor, a popular TV series ran an episode in which the teen starlet faced a moral dilemma: Should I or should I not go to bed with my boyfriend? After 25 suspense-filled minutes, she arrived at the conclusion that she shouldn't. The reason? She and her suitor were not yet mature enough for such an intimate relationship. "Maybe someday," she informed her mother. "But I'm just not ready right now." The parents of my teenage flock were impressed, relieved and delighted: "morality" had won the day, and their daughters' virginity was intact. In truth, what scant virginity still existed in that youth group

was now less secure than ever. The question had not been resolved by an appeal to the Standard of morality ("It's wrong because God says so"), but simply by this pubescent strumpet's lawless assessment of her own "readiness" to disobey God as fully as she and her panting young Lothario would have liked. The real message of the show was not an exhortation to chastity, but a declaration of independence from godly cultural standards. It is an example of the way "the Transformation Industry is bent on collectivizing us" (p. 359) by stripping us of our social inheritance. The disintegration of norms is the prelude to tyranny, for spiritual slavery prepares a culture for slavery of every kind. It is noteworthy that the era of "sexual freedom" has also been the era of unprecedented government intervention and control.

Carson next outlines the extension of communism and gradualism throughout the world during the Cold War period, noting the Idea's relationship to foreign aid and the concept of the "Third World"—a concept which is paradigmatic for both revolutionary and gradualist countries. The Third World nations are held to be victims of capitalist "exploitation" (i.e., investment). The wealthy West is guilty of causing the poverty of backward nations, and the Third World is therefore justified in confiscating foreign-owned capital and industry. The Third World concept, as Carson states, is a fraud. But it is also "fearsome testimony to the firmness of the grip the Idea now has on the world" (p. 448).

In his closing section, Carson describes the effect which the Idea, in its various guises, has had upon the individual. He is especially thought-provoking in his discussion of how the factory system has aided in subjugating men to collectivism, reducing the meaning of their life and work. The rise of the factory coincided with the rise of communism, which the author sees as "the nineteenth century factory system writ large" (p. 475).

Considering the primary focus of the book, any disagreements I have are of minor importance. But in the hope of aiding some of my readers, I will mention one of them: it is with Carson's evaluation (p. 498f.) of the "subjective theory of value" as expounded by Ludwig von Mises—a theory which I believe has caused some Christians needless confusion. Mises is certainly wrong (and inconsistent) in holding economics to be "value-free." But the subjective theory in essence refers simply to the way market prices are determined—not whether the valuations of individuals are highly esteemed by God. The point is that "each party attaches a higher value to the good he receives than to that he gives away (Mises, *Human Action*, p. 331). The result of any free exchange is thus that *both* parties have profited; neither has profited at the other's expense.

Carson's book clears away much of the fog surrounding the issues of our day, enabling us to perceive the nature of socialism's motivating vision, and pointing the way to genuine freedom through individual responsibility before God. Your personal or classroom library will be enriched by this work.

Note: Age of Inflation, by Hans Sennholz, is now available from Western Islands in paperback at \$4.95. Write to the publishers at 395 Concord Ave., Belmont, Massachusetts 02178.

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