

dag heward-mills

Proton

By

Dag Heward-Mills

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Dedication

To

Elaine Osei *and* ***Amelia Aidoo***

Thank you for coming faithfully all the way from Legon to Korle-Bu to be a part of the ministry in its early stages. You were my *proton* members.

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Chapter 1

Proton Defined

The priorities of Jesus are stated throughout the Gospels. When you are a sinner, you basically choose between two opinions: good and evil. As you grow in the Lord, your options increase and you begin to have more to choose from.

This time your choices are not between good and evil but between good and good. In terms of what to do, there are often several good things to choose from. When you get to that point it is important that you understand the concept of priorities: "Which one do I do first?" Jesus gave us a great revelation on some things that should be done before others.

It is interesting to study how many things Jesus said should be done first. Whenever Jesus spoke of the first or the foremost issue, He used the Greek word **"proton"**. In this book, we take a look at the *proton* issues; *things that Jesus said should be done first. "Proton"* means "the first, first in time, order and number". *"Proton"* also means "that which is first in rank and value." *"Proton"* speaks of "the most important thing" and "that which precedes all others". Finally, the *"proton"* issue is the "foremost issue."

Why Proton?

1. Anything that is not done first seems to lose its significance.

God is very patient with us. Many have disobeyed Him and seem to have gotten away with it. The importance of the Word of God seems to fade as we carry on in disobedience. Very soon that which is more important than anything else becomes despised and irrelevant.

Today, I minister under the anointing and many respect me for the ministry. But if I had not obeyed God when I did, I may have lived out my life normally as a medical doctor. Discussions about the call of God would have seemed insignificant and irrelevant.

Sitting amongst my medical colleagues in various hospitals, the thought of being a pastor would have sounded ridiculous. I would have said to my friends, "Let me tell you about a silly idea I once had. Did you know that I once wanted to be a pastor? When we were younger, we were overspiritual and impractical."

Have you never met grown-ups who said they were originally lined up for priesthood? In their old age they try to compensate for their disobedience through their children.

I know a man who tried to force one of his children to become a priest.

He said to his son, "God called me to be a priest but I didn't do it. You become that priest and I will give you property and money so that you lack nothing." At the end of their lives they desperately want to compensate for a life of noncompliance and non-cooperation with God.

Dear friend, I can assure you that the longer you walk in your own ways the more distant and unrealistic the commands of God will seem. There is a reason for *proton*. *Proton*, doing first things first, saves you from deception. God will take care of you and be with you as you flow in His will.

2. Anything that is not done first may never be done.

Delay often means cancellation. Anything that is not done first may never be done. I never knew that delaying something could actually lead to its cancellation. There was a day I had to make a trip from London to New York to minister. I was actually scheduled to minister in Maryland that night. Unfortunately, I had a very early flight from Heathrow Airport in London, to Amsterdam and then I was to connect from Amsterdam to New York. Somehow I did not believe the time I saw on my ticket. I thought it was too early to be true.

When I got to the airport, for the first time in my life, I was too late to check-in or to board the aircraft. I had missed the check in time by about twenty minutes. I was disappointed. I had to wait for the next flight to Amsterdam!

"You cannot make your first connection to New York but you can get a later flight," they told me. I realized from the time, thatI would still make it to New York and just in time to drive to Maryland. So I called New York and told the pastor when I would be arriving and told him that we would need to drive rapidly to Maryland. I assured him that we were in good time and that the programme would surely come on in spite of the slight delay.

In Amsterdam, I confidently boarded my connecting flight to New York knowing that it would soon take-off and I would be on my way. After a while, I looked out of the window and I saw people spraying the wings of the plane. Then came the announcement: "There is so much ice on the engine that it will not be safe to take- off. It will take us one hour to get rid of it. Please bear with us."

I did another calculation and I still felt I could just make it to Maryland for the programme. The whole church would be waiting for me. They had been expecting me for weeks. Unfortunately, it was not to be so.

After the ice problem was solved, a new one arose, introducing even further delays. This time they said the toilets in the plane were not working and they had to fix them. I had never heard of toilets in a plane not working but it was happening live! It took another two hours before we were finally ready for take-off.

I sat in anguish as the minutes went by, imagining how many people would have gathered for the programme. Eventually, I had to accept that the programme would be cancelled because I would not make it in time. As I sat in my chair, I reflected over how the twenty-minute delay in London had cancelled my entire programme. It was then that the Lord spoke to me: *"Do you see that delay can mean cancellation?"*

The Lord showed me that the delay in obeying His Word could lead to my never doing His will! The Lord showed me that He had allowed me to have this experience so that I would learn how the delay in doing His will sometimes leads to my never doing it.

Many who intend to obey God will never end up obeying Him because they put the wrong things first. Their marriage, their PhDs, their MBAs, and their five-year trip abroad, all come before obedience to the Lord. Obedience to God, which they put in second place never materialized. I have watched with sadness as people who should have been full-time in the ministry postpone it till after they accomplished certain things. Unfortunately that delay permanently closed the opportunity for them to be in full-time ministry. What people don't realize is that with time, circumstances change so much that the will of God does not seem realistic any more.

Delay often means cancellation but many do not know this fact. Has God spoken to you? What has He asked you to do? Maybe obeying God is not *proton* for you. Perhaps a thousand different things come before your obedience to the Lord.

3. It is an insult to give the second place to that which should be first.

Many do not realize that it is insulting to make God your second or third option.

One day while I was preaching, I identified several young ladies who did not have husbands.

I suggested to them to get married to a nice young man in church. They all refused.

"Why don't you want to marry him, is he not a handsome man?"

"Yes he is," they answered. "Is he a spiritual person?" *"Yes he is. He is even a pastor."* "Does he not have a car and a house?" *"Yes he does. Actually his car is very nice."* "Then why don't any of you want to marry him?" *"Because he has a wife already," they answered.* I continued, "But you can be his second wife?" In chorus they all cried out, *"No way, no sir, we will not be second wives, we want to be number one."* They felt insulted that I would offer them the second position. They wanted to be wives but not second wives. These young ladies wanted to be wives but only if they would be the first and only wives. This is how God feels. He knows we will serve Him but He wants us to serve Him first. It is actually an insult to put God after anything! Unfortunately, God is constantly relegated to the second, third and sometimes tenth place of importance. It is time for God to take His proton (foremost) position in your life.

4. Problems abound when that which is to be first becomes second.

When something that is supposed to be done second is done first, many things go wrong. I was recently in one African country and my host took me to a cemetery. I was amazed at the fresh graves that were gradually filling every space. At a dinner, with another pastor friend, he gave

me an incredible account of the number of funerals that he was conducting in his city. He told us that they had so many funerals that pastors no longer conducted funeral services. The funerals were so numerous that cell leaders had to conduct burial services of church members.

I listened in amazement. He went on to describe how they no longer buried people lying down because there was no space in the cemetery. He described how they buried them vertically, standing up! The coffins were actually placed vertically into the ground to save space. In other words, the dead bodies would stand, rather than lie down. I thought to myself, "In such a situation do you say, "stand in peace," or "rest in peace" ?

What was the cause of this unprecedented wave of death in this country? Why were so many people dying? The answer was simple: the second thing had come before the first thing. Sex had come before marriage. Sex is supposed to be experienced only after marriage. In this country, sex was an experience occurring largely outside the context of marriage. A wave of death had swept through that nation because the first thing had become the second and the second thing first.

Chapter 2

Proton and Relationships

Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first (*PROTON*) be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Mathew 5:23-24

The word "first" was translated from the Greek word *proton*. As I said earlier, the word *proton* means "the first", "first in time, order and number". *Proton*, also means "that which is first in rank and value". *Proton* speaks of "the most important thing" and "that which precedes all others". Finally, the *proton* issue is the "foremost issue".

Jesus is teaching us that a good relationship with everyone should come before worshipping Him in church. It is easy for us to lift up our hands in worship. But the Lord has made it clear that we need to sort out our relationships before we come to Him. This is a priority for the Lord. He said

we should do this before we worship. Why is it so important for us to leave our gifts at the altar before worshipping Him?

Five Reasons Why You Must Leave Your Gift at the Altar

1. Having good relationships proves that you are not a liar.

If a man say, I Love God, and hateth his brother, He Is A LIAR: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

1 John 4:20

This Scripture shows that if you cannot love the people you see, but claim to love God, you are actually a liar. God does not want a bunch of liars lifting their hands in prayer. Would you feel happy if a large group of liars came to your gate seeking for help? Would you not call the police?

2. Having good relationships proves that you are not a murderer.

Whosoever Hateth His Brother Is A Murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

1 John 3:15

The Bible teaches that when you hate your brother, you are a murderer. God does not want murderers knocking at His door. How would you feel if a large group of murderers assembled at your home seeking audience with you? Would you not be terrified?

3. Having good relationships proves that you are not abiding in death.

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother AbIdeTH In deATH.

1 John 3:14

“To abide in death”, means “to be separated and isolated from God”. Who wants to live in a permanent state of separation from God? It is very important that we straighten out our relationship with the Lord. God wants us to come out of this state before we approach Him in prayer, praise and worship. How would you feel if a large group of dead bodies assembled at your home desiring to be with you? Would you not be terrified?

4. Having good relationships proves that you are no longer living in darkness.

He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, Is In dARkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. but he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

1 John 2:9-11

Read the Scripture above and you will realize that to love your brother is so important in your spiritual walk. Failing to do so will open you up to the danger of stumbling. You will live in darkness. Every time you approach the Lord, a cloud of darkness is seen approaching the throne. How would you feel if a cloud of darkness surrounded your home everyday? Would you not be terrified? That is why God insists that we straighten out our relationships first.

5. Having good relationships proves that you have forgiven those that have wronged you.

And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. but if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

Mark 11:25-26

Without forgiveness, God will not hear your prayer. He will not receive your worship. Without forgiveness, you are wasting your time at the altar.

Chapter 3

Proton and the Kingdom

"But seek ye first (*PROTON*) the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Matthew 6:33

God wants the first part of everyone's life. The first part of our lives is the season of productivity. It is the period in which people abound in faith, hope, love and fertility. Seek the Kingdom of God before you seek your personal kingdom of wealth, comfort and security. There are many reasons why the Kingdom of God must be sought first and in the first part of your life.

1. The kingdom of God requires an early start.

The kingdom of Heaven also requires a lot of time and attention.

The commonest characteristic of large churches is that the pastor has been there for many years. It takes a long time to grow a congregation from the fellowship stage to the mega church stage. If you think that the work of God can be done in a few weeks, or months, you deceive yourself and the truth is not in you. It takes many years for something substantial to be accomplished in ministry.

Let me give you an exercise. Take any well-known and large ministry and find out when the pastor really began his ministry. Jesus Himself began His preparation for ministry as a child. Samuel the prophet was brought to the temple as a child. The preparation takes many years. This is why Levites became priests only by the age of thirty.

From THIRTY YEARS OLD and upward even until fifty years old, all that enter into the host, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation.

Numbers 4:3

This is why Jesus started His ministry by the age of thirty,

And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli,

Luke 3:23

Because the work of God requires so much time both for preparation and actual ministry, it must be the first thing in your life.

Many people put off the ministry because they actually despise it; they feel that it is something that can be done within a short time.

2. The Kingdom needs young people.

There are many things that only young people can do. There are things I did when I was younger that I cannot do today. For instance, I remember when I was in secondary school, I fasted for almost one school term. I wonder if I could do something like that today.

I used to hold “dawn-broadcasts” (open-air preaching at dawn) in many places. As a student, I did many exciting things for the Lord. All night prayer meetings, dawn broadcasts, twelve-hour prayer meetings, seven-hour prayer meetings etc. Although I basically do the same things today,

there are obvious changes in the intensity and style. I really cherish the more youthful years I spent in Christ. In those years I memorized entire chapters of the Bible. It is the verses I learnt in those days that form the basis of my Scripture knowledge today.

Perhaps you do not know why God wants you to take Him as the first thing in the first part of your life. Perhaps you want to give God your years of weakness and trembling. The first part is the best part: when you are strong, energetic and zealous. That is the part that God wants!

3. The kingdom of God needs faith, hope, and love.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

Ecclesiastics 12:1

The Kingdom of God needs energetic people for the ministry. There is a lot of stress and strain in the ministry. Contrary to what people think, pastors are often very stressed and very tired. They rarely have time for themselves and their families.

In the first part of your life you are full of faith, hope and love. Watch the older people and you will notice that they have less "spring in their gait". Tiredness and weariness has set in. Bad experiences have made them weary and suspicious of everyone. They trust no one and are unwilling to try new things. The spirit of adventure is gone. They are hardened by their lives' experiences. Older people have seen pain, bitterness and death. Yes, they believe in God but it is a little different from a younger person's faith. In the first part of your life, you are not yet broken-hearted. It is this part that God badly wants. God wants the first part of your life. The book of Ecclesiastes, Chapter 12, aptly describes this.

Keep your creator in mind while you are young! In years to come, you will be burdened down with troubles and say, "I don't enjoy life anymore." Your body will grow feeble, your teeth will decay, and your eyesight fail. The noisy grinding of grain will be shut out by your deaf ears, but even the song of a bird will keep you awake. You will be afraid to climb up a hill or walk down a road. Your hair will turn as white as almond blossoms. You will feel lifeless and drag along like an old grasshopper...

Ecclesiastics 12:1,3-5 (Contemporary english version)

It is said that King Solomon wrote the book of Song of Solomon in his youth, the Proverbs in his middle age and the Book of Ecclesiastes in his older years. You will notice that the mood of each of these books is different. In the Song of Solomon, he is excited and in love. In the Book of Proverbs, he shares practical wisdom for regular life. But in the Book of Ecclesiastes, his mood is quite different. He describes many of life's experiences as inconsequential, vain and futile.

Nothing makes sense. I have seen it all—nothing makes sense.

Ecclesiastics 12:8 (Contemporary english version)

This drop in mood greatly affects the work of God. It takes faith and hope in Heaven to take up your cross and sacrifice for an unseen God.

I enjoy the company of the younger Christian leaders in my church. They seem to enjoy what I preach more than the older ones. Many times they crowd around me after church just wanting to chat with me. They seem to believe everything I say, no matter how hard it sounds.

I remember one day in particular, I was talking to a group of older pastors. The younger university folks gathered around me as usual. As I continued chatting with them, I noticed as the older ones slunk away one after the other until I was left with only the young people. I wasn't saying anything in particular that pertained to young people, but the older guys were just not interested.

In the first part of your life you are very responsive, zealous and teachable. God can reach out to you and turn you in almost any direction. As you get older you become uninterested and disillusioned. There seems to be a teachable and humble spirit in the first part of our lives.

4. The Kingdom of God cannot be despised.

There are many jobs that require job-seekers to be below the age of thirty. Why do you think many companies recruit people below a certain age? Because they want to get the best out of them!

Don't despise the church. There are people who say they will work for God when they retire. Which occupation can be compared with the high calling of ministry? Medicine, law, engineering, architecture, carpentry, computing, banking, journalism, research, pharmacy, mining, management, acting, singing, dancing, plumbing, masonry or piloting cannot be compared with the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

Philipians 3:7-8

The priesthood is the high calling of God. And that is what I am involved with. On this earth, the priesthood is despised.

I once had a pastor who couldn't find a wife because he was a pastor. The mother of his would-be bride, refused to allow her daughter to be engaged to a pastor. She felt that a pastor was an aimless, jobless man without prospects. On one occasion, she even sent an emissary to find out if he really worked with the church as he claimed. She also wanted to find out what kind of work he could possibly be doing. The bride's mother's envoy could not hide her surprise when she found out that the church actually had offices and that there was a lot of work going on in these offices.

5. The kingdom cannot be delayed.

Some people think their marriages cannot be delayed, their schools cannot be delayed and their work cannot be delayed. But let me tell you what cannot be delayed: the Kingdom of God! Jesus said we should not say that there are yet four months till the harvest. In other words don't say that there is more time. Don't introduce delays for the Kingdom of God.

Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

John 4:35

Unknown to many people, this earthly life is very timerelated. Every instruction or opportunity is time-related. Hear this and hear it very well: every instruction that God has given to you has an invisible timer on it. A countdown begins from the moment God speaks to you. The available time to perform that duty reduces with every passing hour. Many think they are just biding their time and will take God seriously later. Do not be deceived! The expiry date of your grace period is fast approaching.

When Princess Diana was planning her wedding to her Egyptian boyfriend, she didn't know that she was not far from the night of her accident. She was oblivious to the fact that she was to be

the subject of the largest funeral of all time. She didn't know the time. Do you know the time? Do we know the time?

If God has called you to the ministry a clock has begun to tick. A time will come when you will no longer be able to fulfil that instruction. Sometimes God speaks to you, "Finance my Kingdom." Perhaps that comes along with a five-year period wherein you can obey Him. Perhaps He tells you, "Go out as a missionary." Maybe that has a ten-year period wherein you could fulfil it. Some people spend seven years of that period doing other things and then in the last three years attempt to obey God. But their time is almost up. Nothing effective can be done in the remaining three years.

6. Jesus rejects all those who put their family, business or personal wealth before the kingdom of God.

And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I HAVE BOUGHT A PIECE OF GROUND, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I HAVE BOUGHT FIVE YOKE OF OXEN, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I HAVE MARRIED A WIFE, and therefore I cannot come.

Luke 14:17-20

Many decent Christians hide behind their families or legitimate businesses to stay away from obeying God. Unfortunately, Jesus specifically mentions these things as reasons that will not stand before Him. Nothing, and I mean nothing is more important than God and our service to Him. When God calls you, you have no right to use your wife, husband or children as a reason to stay away. When God calls for you, you have no right to use your business or personal wealth as a reason to stay away.

Read it for yourself. Contrary to what many dignified and self-righteous people think, your service to God is more important than any of these things.

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist church had major problems with his wife. She did not want him to continue corresponding with some of the congregants in his parish. John Wesley preached on Sunday, got married on Monday and preached the next day. In less than a month, he

was on the road again. Neither wife nor family could stop him from doing what his heart loved most. Today, the Methodist Church stands as a veritable testimony to the unyielding commitment of John Wesley to the things of God.

Eventually, he was separated from his wife and spent the last twenty years of his life alone. When she died, he was only told about it some days after she had been buried. One writer commented on this marriage. He said the kindest assessment that could be made of John Wesley's wife was that she was mentally challenged. John Wesley knew his God and nothing was going to take him away from his call. His wife was either going to help him or step aside. Nothing was going to keep him from the Lord whom he loved.

Below is an excerpt from the book "Five Great Evangelists" by John H. Armstong, showing us some of the challenges John Wesley faced and his resilience to stay on track. He was determined to work for the Lord. I am not saying that it is right to be separated from your spouse or anything like that. Please do not misunderstand me! I am simply showing you what John Wesley went through in his determination to continue his ministry. I am illustrating a certain commitment to the work of God in spite of difficult marriage circumstances. I know it will help some people.

John had known Mrs. Vazeille briefly when they were married in February 1751. He had preached on a Sunday, married her on a Monday, and preached again on the Tuesday following. Two weeks later, he set out for Bristol, leaving Mary behind. After four days away from her, John wrote, 'My body is stronger and stronger – and so is my love to you. God grant it may never go beyond His will! O that we may continue to love one another as Christ has loved us.' After a few days back in London, he headed north. He wrote in his journal a month after marriage, 'I cannot understand how a Methodist preacher can answer it to God, to preach one sermon or travel one day less, in a married state than in a single state.' He may have had an eye on Charles when he wrote this. He had left itinerant ministry and settled into a very happy marriage.

John and Mary began their relationship poorly and from this beginning it went downhill fast. When asked to explain why he had married without consulting the members of the Oxford Holy Club, who had all agreed to the idea of mutual approval, he sought to explain himself. He referred to his marriage as being undertaken to 'break down the prejudice about the world and him' and that until two weeks before, he had never thought about such a marriage. Is it surprising, then, that the trouble was not far away?

Just a few weeks after the wedding John wrote Mary telling her to open his personal mail during his long absence. When she began to read the letters that came to him from women all over Britain she became

almost insanely jealous. She objected to correspondence from one woman in particular. Further, she refused to travel with him in his ministry, thus never becoming the model companion he thought he had married. Her open complaints against him only made things worse and she showed an amazing capacity for real meanness. She would steal her husband's letters, take portions that were of questionable matter, and then turn them over to the public press. On at least one occasion she physically attacked him. She repeatedly accused him of adultery. By 1753 Ned Perronet called her 'absolutely intractable.'

John and Mary seemed to try, for awhile, but there was no way he felt that he could shirk his responsibilities at this point in his life. They were separated in 1755 and though they tried several reconciliations, off and on for nearly twenty years they had almost nothing to do with each other afterwards. It was a marriage that never should have happened. Wesley cannot be completely exonerated of blame in this bad marriage. He chose poorly and he really had no business getting married under the circumstances. Yet it is also certain that Mary knew what she was entering into when she married John Wesley. She had a fairly full idea of what she would face as his wife.

Professor Umphrey Lee has summed up the situation well:

Southey may be right that Mrs. Wesley deserves to be placed along with Xanthippe and Job's spouse as one of the three bad wives, but John Wesley deserves the place which someone has given him as one of the world's worst husbands.

Wesley resolved to not contend with Mary further and said by writing: 'you have wronged me much but not beyond forgiveness.' It is significant to observe his sentiments in several letters that he mailed to her in which he said:

I love you still, and am as clear from other women as the day I was born. At length know me and know yourself. Your enemy I cannot be. But let me be your friend; suspect me no more; asperse me no more; provoke me no more. Do not any longer contend for mastery; for power, money or praise. Be content to be a private insignificant person, known and loved by God and me. Attempt no more to abridge me of the liberty which I claim by God and man. Leave me to be governed by God and my own conscience; then shall I govern you with gentle sway, and shew that I do indeed love you, even as Christ the church.

In early 1771, Mary left John permanently. His journal entry written in Latin, says: ' I did not leave her; I did not send her away;

I shall not call her back.' She died, October 8,1781, at the age of seventy-one, after having been for over thirty years a terrible burden to her husband. He was not informed of her death until two days after her burial.

1-1 John Wesley and his wife. Page 113-114, Five Great Evangelists by J.H. Armstrong.

Chapter 4

Proton and Our Faults

> And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first (*PROTON*) cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.
>
> **Matthew 7:3-5**

Jesus warned us to consider our own faults before commenting on the faults of others. In order to help us further, He gave a blanket suggestion: "Judge not!" In other words, say nothing about anything! This is one of the commonest problems of Christians. How we love to criticize people, how we love to see the mistakes in our friends!

I want to show you a frightening truth, which if understood, will help us shut our mouths until we get to Heaven.

SURELY, THE BEAM IS THERE!

The Scripture is not suggesting the possibility of a beam being in your eye. It is affirming the reality of a beam in your eye. "Why do you look at the mote in your brother's eye without noticing the beam in your eye?" *In other words there is a beam!* It is there whether you know it or not.

This is the reality that most people can't appreciate. *Every sin, mistake or fault you see in someone is already in you.* When you see a brother or sister in fornication or adultery, just begin to see yourself. You are seeing another version of yourself. You may ask, "Pastor, how is this possible?" The answer is in the Scripture: **"BUT CONSIDEREST NOT THE BEAM THAT IS IN THINE OWN EYE?"**

“To consider” means “to think deeply, analyze, to meditate, to ponder and to reflect”. When you reflect deeply on the issue you will realize that you are also guilty. Do you remember the woman who was caught in the act of adultery? The people wanted to stone her but Jesus made them consider their own lives. He told them, “After considering your own state carefully, you may go ahead and execute this lady.” After a little reflection, the accusers slunk away one after another.

Dear reader, when I understood this Scripture, my mind began to race. I thought of all the possible sins I knew of. After serious consideration, I realized that I was genuinely guilty of every sin, even the far-fetched ones.

One day, I had a vision of one of our churches. They were having a camp meeting. It was as though I was standing above them. As they lifted their hands and worshipped, the Lord said to me: “Murderers and fornicators.” I said, “Lord, how can this be? These are holy children of God who really love you.” The Lord gave me just two Scriptures:

Whosoever HATETH HIS BROTHER IS A MURDERER: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

1 John 3:15

But I say unto you, That whosoever LOOKETH ON A WOMAN TO LUST after her hath COMMITTED ADULTERY with her already in his heart.

Matthew 5:28

The Lord told me, “Most Christians hate somebody somewhere.” By God’s standards, that makes them murderers. He continued, “Most men lust after women everyday.” According to God’s standards, this is the same as adultery. Suddenly, I could see how those in this group could be described as adulterers and murderers. One day, I conducted an experiment. I addressed pastors in the presence of the congregation , “All pastors who have committed adultery should please stand up.” Most of the pastors felt uneasy. They looked at me wondering what I was up to. No one stood up. Then I said, “All pastors who have ever lusted after a woman should please stand up!” They all stood up smiling in agreement. They were thinking, “Lust is a lesser crime and for that we shall stand.”

When they were all standing, I announced to the church that these pastors were all adulterers. They were dumbfounded. But I explained the Scripture to them. In God's eyes, we are adulterers. Perhaps we have committed adultery a thousand times without even knowing it. That is why it makes no sense to point at and analyze the faults of another Christian. There is an implanted beam in both of your eyes. How funny we must look in Heaven as we accuse one another of crimes that we are guilty of ourselves. Even the September 11 tragedy teaches us this principle. It is easy to point a finger at an Islamic terrorist. It is even easier to blame the training camps of Al Qaeda and terrorist leader Osama Bin Laden. However, a little consideration on the part of Christians will show us that our lack of missionary zeal and our disobedience to the Great Commission leaves these nations at the mercy of other religions.

Today, false religions are taking root in poor African countries. Places that were traditionally Christian are changing into a mixture of Islam and Christianity. Regions that were Islamic are becoming radicalized, giving rise to such terrorists. Perhaps we are greater murderers because we refuse to go and preach. Perhaps the blood of all these people is on our hands because we failed to reach them with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; BUT HIS BLOOD WILL I REQUIRE AT THINE HAND.

Ezekiel 3:18

The Scripture tells us that we will have to account for the blood of sinners we failed to warn. The church today is busy enjoying itself in "merry-go-round" activities which make no advances into enemy territories. Security, safety, more shelter and more personal well-being are the hallmarks of the church today. Where are the missionaries? Where are the radicalized Christians who are ready to stand up and be counted?

Mature Christians rarely have any comment to make about another brother's difficulties. When you hear of scandals and problems (motes), you bow your head in fear and trembling knowing that your (beam) is there.

Our approach to God is only made possible by the blood of Jesus. If we say we have no sin we are living in the highest kind of deception.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1:8

Chapter 5

Proton and Our Problems

Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first (*PROTON*) bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

Matthew 12:29

Deal first with the spiritual roots of your problems otherwise you will never have the breakthrough you need.

The strong man speaks of the devil and the spiritual factors that make things happen. Except we address problems from the spiritual perspective, they often never get solved. Whether God's blessing is needed or Satan has to be bound, it is important that the spiritual nature of issues is addressed.

Many problems have spiritual roots. Often we try to solve problems without dealing with the root cause. A carnallyminded person has his mind on natural causes thereby eliminating the spiritual factors. The fact that we are educated does not mean that spiritual causes must be left out of our thinking.

The God of the "Gaps Theory"

Education and science are not contrary to spiritual things. At the bottom of it all we believe that it is God who works things out. Some people have tried to explain religion and spiritual things with a theory known as the "Gaps Theory". In this theory, people claimed that whenever there was a lack (a gap) of human knowledge, the existence of God was used as an explanation. However when there were more scientific discoveries to explain the phenomenon, the concept of God was removed.

For instance, they claim that when men did not understand the principles of evaporation and conversion, the phenomenon of rain was ascribed to God's mercy. But when science discovered how rain was brought about, God was eliminated from that gap. These atheists believe that

through science, almost all the gaps of knowledge have been filled and that is why many people do not need to believe in God any more.

However, your education should not make you eliminate God. I am a medical doctor and a scientist in my own right. My education and my knowledge have made me believe in God even more.

Unfortunately, we make ourselves fools when we eliminate God from our thinking.

AND EVEN AS THEY DID NOT LIKE TO RETAIN GOD IN THEIR KNOWLEDGE, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

Romans 1:28

When you do not retain God in your knowledge, you develop a reprobate mind. Always include God. You must know that God is the source of all blessings and the devil is the cause of all the evil around us. Every good and every perfect gift comes from God.

It is the highest kind of deception to think that the good things in your life came just by your hard work. It is the Lord who promotes, it is the Lord, who lifts up, and it is the Lord who blesses.

For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. but God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

Psalm 75:6-7

Chapter 6

Proton and Our Mistakes

Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the FIRST (*PROTON*).

Matthews 27:64

The first error speaks of the initial mistake that leads to all other mistakes. We must look out for this first error because it has a way of opening the door for a series of errors.

The Errors of the Pharisees

The ***first mistake*** of the Pharisees was to become religious and self-righteous.

Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

Luke 8:12

Their ***second mistake*** was to reject the ministry of grace and truth that came through Christ.

He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

John 1:11

Their ***third mistake*** was to become jealous of the Lord Jesus.

For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.

Matthew 27:18

Their ***fourth mistake*** was to murder Christ.

And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

Matthew 27:35

Their ***fifth mistake*** was to disbelieve His resurrection.

And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

Matthew 28:12-15

The ***last error*** was to persecute those who proclaimed the good news of Jesus Christ and His resurrection.

And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the sadducees, came upon them, being GRIEVED THAT THEY TAUGHT THE PEOPLE,

and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And THeY LAId HAnds on THeM …

Acts 4:1-3

As you can see, the first error opened the door to a series of more serious errors.

Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the FIRsT.

Matthew 27:64

The Errors of king david

King David had murdered Uriah, one of his trusted soldiers. This was one of the low points in the life of David. But this was not the first error.

The ***first error*** was when he stayed at home at a time when kings were supposed to be at war.

And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that david sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. but david tarried still at Jerusalem.

2 samuel 11:1

The ***second error*** was adultery with Bath-sheba.

And david sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this bath-sheba, the daughter of eliam, the wife of uriah the Hittite?And david sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.

2 Sam 11:3-4

The ***third error*** was the murder of Uriah, Bath-sheba's husband.

And he wrote in the letter, saying, set ye uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die.

2 Samuel 11:15

These two examples clearly show that the first error is often a door to many more errors. MERCY!

Chapter 7

Proton and Fruitfulness

For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first (*PROTON*) the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

Mark 4:28

Even in bearing fruit, there is an order. The fruit you may bear at a certain stage of your life may just be a prelude to other fruit that God has in store for you. "First the blade, then the ear and after that, the full corn." That is the order in which it comes. Some people are going to be full-time pastors but God wants them to start out as lay pastors. Some people are going to be great evangelists but the first part of their ministry may be to pastor a church. God has called some of you to have huge churches. Before this full corn will appear, the blade and the ear must appear first.

There are pastors who stand in huge auditoriums every Sunday. But it didn't begin that way. For some of them the first ten years of ministry only produced "the blade". Keep going and "the ear" is going to come forth; finally the full corn is going to be manifested to all.

Chapter 8

Proton and Inheritance

But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first (*PROTON*) be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs.

Mark 7:27

The blessings of a father must first be directed to his children. Thereafter others may benefit. There is a custom amongst certain Ghanaian tribes by which the nieces and the nephews of a man are the first to inherit their uncle's property. This tradition is not biblical and Christians must not practise it. I know many children who have been devastated by their father's decision to give his best inheritance to his sister's children, instead of to his own children.

Their fathers do this because they claim that they can be certain that the children that came from their sisters' wombs are truly related to them. However, they can never really tell whether the children that came from their wives' wombs are really their children. Such a tradition is based on the highest kind of fear and mistrust.

There are situations in which those who should receive the blessings first are not open to receive their father's blessings. There are times I have wondered as those nearby wallowed in familiarity. Strangers and unfamiliar people come from afar and take the first blessing which belongs to the children. Since the servant is not greater than his master, if this is what happened to Christ, it will happen to us.

And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 8:11-12

Chapter 9

Proton and Mary Magdalene

It is significant that the Lord appeared first to Mary Magdalene.

Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared FIRsT to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

Mark 16:9

Women had a special place in the ministry of Jesus. They were not called to be apostles or pastors. Jesus did not have any woman in His team of twelve disciples. But why did He appear first to Mary Magdalene? This is a great lesson to all of us.

Your importance to the Lord Jesus is not determined by the magnitude of the task given to you. Your personal faithfulness, dedication and commitment to the Lord Jesus is more important than anything else.

Mary Magdalene was at the scene of the crucifixion. She was personally dedicated to the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ even though she had no special position or function. The *proton* commandment of the Lord Jesus is to love God with all your heart. One of the highest

indicators of your maturity in Christ is your love and intimacy for the Lord. Could it be that Mary Magdalene is higher than the twelve apostles because she loved the Lord? Will people who love the Lord be higher than those who just work for Him? Do you love the Lord? Do you love Him personally? There are many that will come in Christ's name and say, "I did this great work, I healed the sick, I cast out demons, I accomplished this in Your Name." But Jesus will say, "I never knew you."

It seems that knowing God is far more important than the things we do for Him.

In one of Paul's last letters, he prayed: "That I may know him". Mary Magdalene was not a high official in the church. After this incident, we never hear of her any more. One thing we do know however, is that she knew the Lord personally and loved Him dearly. After the ordeal of the crucifixion and the resurrection, Jesus saw it fit to appear first to Mary Magdalene. Of all the people that Christ appeared to, she was found worthy to be the first.

May you be found worthy of such visions and blessings! I pray for you that you will not just work for the Lord but know Him intimately!

Chapter 10

Proton and Your Journey

And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.

Luke 10:5

The first thing to bring to any home is the peace of God.The Scripture teaches us to have our feet shod with the Gospel of peace. How you start a visit determines the tone of your stay. Many people start their interaction with others on a carnal note. It then becomes more difficult to establish a spiritual relationship with someone you have known carnally.

I remember the unfortunate story of a zealous brother who backslid in a new school. This friend of mine had to attend sixth form in this new boarding school. On the first day of school, some unbelievers hailed and befriended him.

Upon their first interaction, they thought he was an unbeliever and really liked him. Unfortunately, this brother had no chance to tell them that he was a born-again Christian who spoke in tongues and prophesied. He had no chance to first say, "Peace be to this house."

How you start your relationships determines the future of the friendship.

Before long, they were offering him cigarettes, girls and booze. His opportunity to inform them of his Christian beliefs was gone. How could he tell them that he was a religious person when they had accepted him as one of their gang?

This brother paid dearly for not saying first of all, “Peace be to this house.” *Proton* speaks of the things you must do first. For the next two years, he experienced a horrible era of backsliding and sin.

I always like to first present the Gospel of peace. I want you to know where I stand. You must first know that I am a believer.

I remember years ago, when I attended an interview for the medical school. Students had gathered from all over the country and I didn’t know any of them. When I entered the hall where the students were waiting to be called in, everyone looked up to see who this lanky young man was. I looked around and saw their staring faces. I opened my mouth and began to speak boldly in tongues. Everyone heard those tongues. Immediately, they knew that I was some kind of born-again, charismatic zealot.

In that instance, I fulfilled this Scripture which says, “First say peace be to this house.” I had indirectly informed them about the Gospel of peace which I stood for. From that moment unbelievers and Christians alike knew my stand. One day, I visited a sister in Volta hall, the ladies’ hall of the University of Ghana, in Accra, Ghana. As I knocked on her door, I noticed several invitation cards in her message box.

Out of curiosity, I picked one of them and read it. It said:

You are invited by …

Tall hunk of a toe-tapper

Love lapper and this is the gapper

…its me, Mr. Pee

I read this wondering what it meant. It was actually an invitation to a wild party. And this was not the only invitation she had. There were several similar invitations for this young lady. I thought to myself : “We are all in the first year of the university, how come she has been invited

to so many parties and I have not received even one invitation?" This young lady had not made her stand clear and that is why unbelievers had the boldness to invite her for wild parties.

Chapter 11

Proton and the Cross

Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first (*PROTON*), and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

Luke 14:31

The first thing to do in every project is to count the cost.

Christianity is a difficult and costly road to walk on. Unfortunately, many ministers are misleading people and making them think that Christianity is a "bless me club" whose principal goal is to hunt for material possessions. Not so! If any man wants to come to Christ he must count the cost. Christianity could cost you your marriage. It could cost you your money, your job and even your life.

And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and TAKE UP HIS CROSS, and follow me.

Mark 8:34

Self-denial is one of the basic truths of the Gospel. I do not know of any stronger statement that our Lord made. In this Scripture, He defines those who cannot be His disciples! This one condition clearly draws a line between those who will qualify and those who will not.

Those who therefore cannot be Christians are those who are not prepared to deny themselves. Where are crosses usually taken to? To restaurants, parties, or weddings? Unfortunately not! Crosses are carried to the places of execution and suffering. This Scripture has only one meaning: it means we must follow the example of Jesus Christ and lay down our lives in obedience to Him. Are you obeying the Lord? I got to know the Lord at about the age of fifteen. I have constantly had to take up my cross, deny myself and follow the Lord. Without doing this,

my Christianity would always have been a phantom of what true Christianity is supposed to be. Dear friend, Christianity then and now is not easy.

The Music I used to Listen to!!

The early years of Christianity, involved saying “no” to things which ordinary people said “yes” to. One of the first things I had to deny myself of was non-Christian music . I used to love music by Lionel Richie, Michael Jackson, the BeeGees and ABBA.

The key verse that guided me in those days was 1 Corinthians 10:23, “ All things are lawful but not all things are helpful.”

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

1 Corinthians 10:23

I really loved and still do love music but there was no way I was going to continue my walk with Christ and listen to this kind of music. Although nice to the ear, it is not spiritually helpful. There are many Christians who do not do well because they are not prepared to deny themselves of certain things.

The Places I used to Go!!

There were places I had to stop going to if I was to continue with the Lord. Dear friend, you cannot go to the same old places now that you are born again. Except you deny yourself, you cannot be a Christian. I used to go a-gambling at the race course every Saturday. I was an avid horse lover and a regular patron of the race course. When I got saved, I had to deny myself the pleasure and foolishness of gambling. *Proton* means you will have to suffer first so that you can grow in the Lord. All these experiences are things I did in the early part of my Christian walk.

The Friends I used to Have!!

Even as I write this book, I realize how essential it is for Christians to deny themselves of many things if they want to serve the Lord.

This denial must come before the glory of God will come. *Proton* speaks of the first thing that must be done.

I had a set of friends before I got saved. When I got saved, I realized that none of these friends were born-again Christians. They would not be helpful to my new faith. One of the first things I had to do was to get rid of the old friends. I had friends who encouraged me to smoke cigarettes. I had friends who tried to introduce me to the smoking of "wee" indian hemp. They showed me where to get it and how it was packaged. I had friends who showed me how to run away from school without permission.

I had a friend who actively encouraged me to get into fornication. He showed me how to do it, who to do it with and where to go. I gradually moved away from all such people until I had a completely new set of friends. Looking back, I realize that without first *(proton)* denying myself of these friends, I could never have progressed with the Lord. I never saw many of these friends again until several years later. Whenever I did meet some of these old friends, I realized what the Lord had done for me. Our lives are so different!

Once, one of my old friends said to me, "Dag I need to see you. I need help." He explained, "I am not talking about financial help at all;I need you to help me spiritually."

The Job I used to do!!

Sometimes, you must first give up certain jobs in order to serve the Lord.

I remember a brother whom I led to the Lord. I watched him say the sinner's prayer. A few days later, I prayed for him to receive the Holy Spirit baptism. I personally laid hands on him and watched him receive the Holy Ghost baptism and saw him speak in tongues. I also counselled him about his lifestyle.

I told him, "You have to change your lifestyle now. You must first say 'no' to the old things, old people and old places of your life." One day, I noticed that this brother had stopped coming to church.

I asked him, "What is happening?" He told me, "I have a new job at a hotel." He continued, "We work in the night and at weekends." Then I probed further, "What exactly do you do at this hotel?"

He mumbled some feeble answer, and I could tell immediately that it was not a decent job. Night after night, he worked amongst smoking, drinking and rollicking men and women of sin, as they danced their lives away on the floor of the nightclub.

This was no atmosphere for a good Christian. It was only a matter of time, before my friend completely backslid. The next time I saw him, he was deep in the world and high on drugs.

Because he did not first sacrifice this job, he backslid.

The Business I Used To Run!!

You see, except you deny yourself, you cannot be a disciple of Christ. I remember another church member, who owned a restaurant in a hotel. One day, in a move to expand the business, the hotel granted him use of a nightclub facility. When I visited the premises, I wondered to myself, "What in the world is a Christian going to do with such a space?" He said, "Oh, they will just play music in the evenings." He explained how it was financially expedient to have this space.

This "music in the evenings" degenerated into a nightclub environment, with half dressed girls singing and dancing every night.

I thought to myself, "How long will this Christian brother be able to stay in the faith?" The last I heard of him, he was out of the church and fully established in the world. He had fallen into any kind of sin you want to think of.

Next I was told he had ended up in a mental hospital. There are times you will have to sacrifice your job so that you can follow Christ. Not all jobs are from the Lord. Every *good* and *perfect* gift comes from the Lord. It is the good and perfect ones that come from the Lord.

The Films I used to Watch!!

The films I used to watch, I could watch them no more. That was not easy for me because I really enjoyed watching films. It is not everything we watch that pleases the Lord.

I would go to different cinema houses in my city and have a good time watching all kinds of films. One day , I was watching a Chinese film at Orion Cinema Hall in Accra . I thought it was a safe film. Suddenly, the hero of the film developed a fever. As he lay shivering under his blanket, it

was decided that the only thing that could keep him warm were naked girls. This film had suddenly changed in its character. That was a turning point for me. I decided to deny myself of this as well.

These things may seem trivial to you but it is the failure to first deny ourselves these very things that prevents us from walking with God.

As I walked with the Lord, I continually had to deny myself many other things. One of the things I had to deny myself of was useless socializing. I also learnt how to deny myself food so that I could fast.

First the suffering, then the glory.

Chapter 12

Proton and Suffering

But first (*PROTON*) must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

Luke 17:25

You must experience some suffering before enjoying the higher blessings of God. Paying this price is nothing compared to the glory that will be revealed in your life. I have noticed that there is no successful minister who does not have a story of suffering and difficulties. Recently, a visiting minister, whose ministry I knew little about, came to speak in our church. As he shared his life testimony, I marvelled at how this principle is played out consistently in everyone's life.

He had been through many things. He had been hungry on many occasions; he had encouraged his wife on several occasions. He had been without money and food many times.

This man is now a very successful minister in the country where he lives. The story is always the same. The suffering comes before the glory.

On the day the temple was dedicated, Solomon made many sacrifices to the Lord. After the sacrifices had been offered, the glory filled the temple and no one could stand to minister. God was moved by the sacrifice. God is still moved by your sacrifice.

The glory of God will surely come after the sacrifice.

Also King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel that were assembled unto him before the ark, SACRIFICED SHEEP AND OXEN, WHICH COULD NOT BE TOLD NOR NUMBERED FOR MULTITUDE. And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LoRd unto his place, to the oracle of the house, into the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubim: For the cherubims spread forth their wings over the place of the

ark, and the cherubim covered the ark and the staves thereof above. And they drew out the staves of the ark, that the ends of the staves were seen from the ark before the oracle; but they were not seen without. And there it is unto this day. There was nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put therein at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of egypt. And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place: (for all the priests that were present were sanctified, and did not then wait by course: Also the Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets:) It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the LoRd, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LoRd; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: FOR THE GLORY OF THE LORD HAD FILLED THE HOUSE OF GOD.

2 Chronicles 5:6-14

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