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### Sermon preached by Mr R Kinderman at Swindon on Thursday evening 14 February 1957

#### Hebrews 12 verses land 2

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"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God"

If I may just speak on a personal note, there are many temptations and in coming into the house of God I was tried because of the passage being well known, and I believe I have spoken from these words before, I do not know whether here. But there is one comfort, and that is that the word of God is a well-spring of living water. Some of you may know what it is to read it and know it, and yet for the Spirit of God to come and make that word known from time to time as the Lord spoke to Moses, and by faith to see through Him, the preciousness of Christ, when He said "My doctrine shall drop as the rain and My speech shall distil as the dew" What a mercy when the word of God comes like that.

The Apostle was writing this epistle to Hebrews. I must just mention this. I know here again the enemy would try to stop our mouth. I believe he would, my friends, at times, and say well, is there any need to discriminate? Is there any need to say that it is to a certain people? Well, the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God because they are foolishness to him. Does not your own experience tally with the Scriptures, sinner - you that are Hebrews? Would that the Lord would make each one that is here a Hebrew. A Hebrew is a circumcised person, not in the flesh. Circumcision is not of the flesh. That availeth nothing. The work of Christ is proved and the solemn truth of Christ coming into the world proved it. "He came unto His own" that is the circumcised after the flesh, "and His

own received Him not; but as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God". That is true circumcision. Ah it is a mercy when we have the mark of circumcision. If you have, sinner; well some of you may want to know, perhaps; have we got the mark of circumcision? Are we Hebrews? If we are, we shall not be strangers to the chapter we have read, Hebrews 11. We shall not be strangers to those who knew what it was to endure a fight, a conflict; who knew what it was to live a life that is separate from the flesh, and that their own flesh was brought into subjection to that life. Ah it is a wonderful mercy. You look into the life of those that we have read of and see the wonderful acts of faith wrought in them, and see how that made manifest a work which brought into subjection, at times, their very bodies. You know we often hear, and it is truth, that we are sinners, and that the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, but the Apostle by the Spirit, tells us that the Spirit lusteth against the flesh, so that we cannot do the things that we would. O, sometimes, you that are Hebrews will know what it is to give God the honour, though your flesh would damn your soul to hell. That is not too extravagant language, though it does not appeal to the refinement of the natural man. Some of you, though you may never have gone into the gross things of the world, and it is a mercy if we have not been left, and some of you that have never known what it is, perhaps, to go into the deep things of worldly amusements, it makes no difference, you know that statement is true. When God comes into the soul by divine life, and He circumcises it unto Himself, He begins to show that we have got that within us that will damn to an eternal hell. There are no great or little sinners in that. We are the chief of sinners, and there is a point in your experience when you have been brought there. So the Apostle was led by the Spirit to bring this cloud of witnesses, that there might be some gracious encouragement, and strengthening of hope as the Spirit of God makes it over, and under all the varied exercises of faith and exercises of the Spirit within, so that there is not a place in spiritual experience but what is graciously opened There is a little comfort of hope and the up in this portion. strengthening of faith made manifest. I mention that because you may be tempted to feel your case is so different. You may sometimes feel such workings within your own soul, and the enemy may tempt you, and say there has never been a person in your particular case and condition. But, my friends, the enemy of your soul, if you are a

Hebrew, was a liar from the beginning. O, sometimes it is a mercy to be helped to be led into the truth, to know that Christ has destroyed the works of the devil, and though he will do his utmost to overthrow, yet he will never be able to do it. I have mentioned that before but I feel sometimes (I can speak homely I feel) I feel sometimes in coming to the house of God that God's people - and I hope we have some indication of their gracious feelings within - they know what it is for the enemy to come in like a flood. They know what it is to be tried and tempted. They know what it is to come into fires. They know what it is to have fights inwardly, experimentally, and they need all that the gospel brings, all that is in Christ. And you do sinner, if you are a Hebrew, and you need that grace from time to time to strengthen, support and help, and to give you grace that you may run with patience the race that is set before you. There is a race set before us. There is to the church, there is to Hebrews. That is, not to the natural I leave that this evening, except to say this, the solemn position is, a natural man, that is a person that is never called by grace, just fills up the measure of his iniquity, whether it is in a refined manner, or in a more obviously evil way. They fill up the measure of their iniquity. There is no end but hell to those out of Christ. Sometimes the thoughts of that have really troubled my spirit, and in my own family. You will be faithful to your family if you have the grace of God. You will not be offended at what I say. I have had to speak at home sometimes in that matter, and desire to speak of what it will mean if there is no grace given. It is a great thing. I have mentioned one or two homely matters this evening, but I do not feel you will be offended. It is very solemn, but very real. It is not duty faith, but there is that exercise of mind because the soul is of such importance. I often feel, whatever position the worldly may be in, and however outwardly kind they are, without the grace of God, apart from the circumcision of the Spirit bringing into this divine path and running the race set before us, (that is for the goal which is Christ, and Christ is heaven) I say my friends, there is nothing but hell at the end. We are exhorted to do good to all men as far as in us lies, especially to the household of faith but while earthly things prevail, I know many, if they were here, they would be very greatly offended. It is solemnly true, and though none that I think of have come back, (as the Lord speaks in the parable they will not hear the voice of the word of God (John 10 v 26) but the moment

after death, if that can be rightly spoken in a way to be understood, what will that mean to all out of Christ? There is no forgiveness then. O it is a mercy to be saved. It is a mercy to be really brought into the line and the life of truth. We can never underestimate it. We can never reach to the end of all that that means. If every sermon were to that end that we must be born again and the Spirit of God graciously blessed it, it would be mercy. It is a tremendous thought, and each of us are in that condition that we are either in the way of God's elect or we are not His children. Is it not a mercy to have a testimony? Well I hope those thoughts are not disconnected.

"Let us run with patience the race set before us" He speaks in comfort to those who know what it is. You never had a trial in reality till God began the work of grace in your soul. You look into it. You look into your own exercises, sinner. These Hebrews make it manifest it was a distinct trial. It was something deep, it was something that could never be healed, and victory could never be gained by the flesh. Nothing that belongs to man could put the matter in its right place, that is the point. Ah that is mercy. O is it not a mercy for the Lord to come into the life of a sinner, and implant something? I remember, as my father used to say, though he knew nothing at all about the way of salvation as we do, in the letter, all he could say was that he felt something strange, felt ill. Ah, but as the Lord opened it, it was something that he could not shake off, and it was something that no human physician could cure. Do you know what that is? It may have been the means of bringing your body down, (and we are not setting aside those that have been raised up by God providentially, to be a means of blessing, to cure and heal diseases of the body; I feel it has been a mercy in the longsuffering of God,) but some of you know what it is to have trouble in yourself that nobody on earth can heal. There is no flesh can do it, no physician. And he writes to those. When God brought these witnesses, each of them, into divine life, they had something that they could not manage themselves, and not only so, but they came into a path that they had never walked before. Why, when God begins a work of grace, at whatever age, there is a felt need, though indescribable - God is no respecter of persons nor of age. We do not do well by nature - we need grace. That has been upon my mind today, through a remark of May Shayler's. I was reading her diary and what her father said respecting her being too young to

understand and that troubled her, but he had to see he was wrong. There is none too young when God comes. The Lord can speak, whatever He can make manifest His truth. He can bring into the warfare. He can teach. "A child shall die an hundred years old"; a wonderful thought. Well I hope these are not altogether digressions. But those in this way had a walk, a walk of faith; they had a land to look forward to. They had a goal, an object, and each of them, by divine mercy, was enabled to walk in that way and to look forward. "They that say such things" says the Apostle - they said it by their feet; O that is a mercy. If faith is in your heart, sinner, and mine, we shall talk with our feet. You will go into Zion's way; you will not be walking in the world. "The friendship of the world is enmity toward God". Our flesh is like the worldling's, and when we are lifeless say, well, it does not really mean what it says. But the word of God does mean what it says. The word of God is clear, and it is clean. "The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul" and when that comes by divine life and faith comes, then that is clean, that enters into heavenly truth, and that speaks in the walk. We are compassed about with a cloud of witnesses who knew the blessedness of faith and what they were enabled to do. They left their native country; they left the things they had done before; they could not follow on in that way; is there any need to think of that in respect to your lawful callings? Ah the Lord teaches, faith teaches. Some of you know what that has done. Faith will teach us how to walk; faith will teach us what is right when it is in lively exercise. It is an unctuous light to that which is right, and a bar to that which is wrong. When that unction comes with divine power in the soul, that is a teacher, and it is a monitor. It is a mercy if the Lord is pleased to keep it alive, and we are exercised not to grieve the Spirit. Ah, you may say, are you going into legality now again? No, not for a moment. Where we do, has not the Lord dealt with us? Has not the Lord in His mercy chastened us? Yes, and we are compassed about with a cloud of witnesses that knew what it was to come under the Lord's discipline and teaching. But they were led by faith, and this is mercy, so that whatever your position and your trial, whatever exercise you are in, in the walk of faith, sometimes none but yourself can know that, but although you may feel and desire to be united in the church, you know what it is personally to have a walk of faith. You may know even in your own home what it is to go alone and have to beg of God to strengthen and help and give you needed power and mercy, and enable you to run with patience the race that is set before you. Sometimes I believe the Lord is pleased to do it to the honour of His Name. You may afterwards be able to tell others. Sometimes it has been sweet to hear the experiences in the church of those in whom, perhaps, though there has been a walk, a consistency in those things that are right, yet there has been an inward work going on that none knew of. Look at Ruth. She walked by faith. She was enabled to run the race set before her.

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses" - Ah what an encouragement - "Let us lay aside every weight and the sin that does so easily beset us". O what an encouragement, my friends, at times, as enabled to lay aside those things that so bind us down, that lie heavily, seem often to impede our progress. When the Lord comes and gives you grace to see and enter into this, and brings the witnesses before you, what they were enabled to do. Abraham went out, not knowing whither he went. says the flesh, that is foolish. But faith enters into that. Has the Lord called you out? There is an encouragement there. The enemy will tempt you on that. He might say, that does not really mean leaving it all. Ah, the devil would have us have an Ananias religion, to keep back part of the price; outwardly profess to be real and yet inwardly to be wrong. But Abraham was not like that, was he? Through the mercy of God he was enabled to leave all, and faith was enabled to prove itself in working. He went out not knowing whither he went, yet God was with him; he never lacked. He was enabled to run with patience the race set before him, and it was "Looking unto Jesus". So the apostle says "They that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country". They have left this deceitful shore. friends, that is no easy matter; only faith can do that. But faith can, I know it can. Faith can do it. I thought as you were singing the first hymn (1083) that is a part of the teaching. A great mercy really to know the power of living faith in Christ. That is an exhortation - "Let us lay aside every weight". Ah, sometimes, when you feel weighted down, what can help you? What can strengthen you? What can give you that enabling to beg of the Lord to grant you grace to run with patience the race set before you and that there might be a winning of the prize? As the apostle speaks in another place of his

own experience, and that there might be a gaining that prize. It is a mercy. I have thought of it recently in this, it will be a mercy to have no shackles when we come to the end. It is a mercy sometimes to be given grace to look into heaven and really desire to be found there and be given grace and prove we have another nature, faith to look there and sometimes, when it is in lively exercise, to be willing to walk in this.

We are compassed about with a cloud of witnesses of the faithfulness of God, the manifestation of His power and truth in that grace that He gave them. Moses was a witness. You see the workings of faith in him "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward". Flesh cannot see the end of the affliction of God's people. Some of you that now love the church of God, you once scorned it; you did not see any beauty in it. If I may say it, you may look back to when you were perhaps brought to the house of God even in infancy, and in youth, and you had no real appetite. You looked upon those that were loved in the church, and thought they were strange people. At least I did. And what can bring you to love them? Only the same faith that Moses had. natural man wants all that he can have of the pleasures of this world. The natural man seeks this world's good. There is his ambition, there are his movements. Ah, says the flesh and the enemy, be careful now, you are treading on dangerous ground; is not there something to be desired? Ah, but faith will teach you to love God in that. Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. That refusal was by faith. He saw the end of that. He saw that all that Pharaoh's palace could bring him would only bring him to hell in the end. Isn't it a mercy to see it! A love of this world is of no real value. I come back to that; it may be helpful. When faith is in exercise, as it was in Moses, then you are enabled to see it clearly, the so-called pleasures of this world are vanity. They never bring happiness to a sin-sick soul. They never bring any happiness to a soul that has been circumcised and knows that there is happiness only in Christ. And the feeling of that, the knowledge of that by faith, is an earnest of heaven. So He was given that grace and faith to choose. He chose the path of a people afflicted, to be with them. O, it is mercy. I would that the Lord would come into the churches now and grant this

mercy, and to us that profess His Name give more clear evidences. I believe that would be for unity; I believe that would be for a right He was made willing - "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God" He knew what the Lord had laid up in store, he knew what the end was to be, nor was he disappointed. You will not be disappointed, sinner. Whatever that may cost you in the flesh to relinquish the pleasures of sin, faith will be rewarded, faith will be lost in sight in heaven. I would that I could live in It is sweet. I believe that though Moses had a path to walk, namely the trial of faith, the sweetness of that which was laid up in store, by faith, he saw, and he had some gracious intimations. When the Lord turned him around to see the burning bush, a sweet view of His covenant grace and His mercy and His love to the church, His everlasting love. I believe that was a gracious view by faith and an enabling to run with patience the race set before him. It was not always in lively exercise, but there was that which enabled him to overcome. There are periods of darkness, but the apostle here speaks for the encouragement of faith. "We are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses". And he says, because of that, here is the mercy, "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us". O, sometimes, when faith is in exercise, you hate the sin that besets you. I do not believe that altogether means it is unbelief, because that is the sin accursed. But the sin that does so easily beset us and binds us down, seems to chain us, at times, to earth, I believe God will reveal that in each of our hearts personally. One of our poets says

> Pray that thy lusts may all be slain, Nor shalt thou seek His face in vain

It is very close work. I have at times begged God. I know what it is to be weighted down and some of you do. It is a hindrance and only the chastening and correcting hand of God can bring us out of it and give to us grace to say "Lord, grant faith in Christ in lively exercise, that I may hate sin and be made willing to be separated from it in its power, and in mercy to run with patience the race that is set before me. And though that means a conflict, tribulation worketh patience. It is a conflict, but O, sometimes in the midst of conflict, when sin rages, the world rages; some of you know what that is painfully. The

world will do its worst; it has no love to the church, because the world is sinful. It may sometimes appear to flatter you. It may sometimes appear to be your friend, but it is your enemy and it will rob you. I know it will! The best seasons are when, by the mercy of God and faith in exercise, although you may be in conflict, you are separated. Some of my best times at work were my darkest moments feelingly, and when I had to beg God for faith and grace in exercise, when I could not do the thing that my own flesh would have done. I have proved them to be good times although they were painful. I mention that because some of you may know it. Ah "Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race set before us".

There is a good end to faith poor sinner. There is a blessed end It will be rewarded. "These all died in faith". O sweet blessing! They were not disappointed. And though the conflict was sharp, and though sometimes they were tempted all hope to resign, I believe, as we sing, and sometimes tempted to believe they would never gain the port, yet they did. They all died in faith. God was faithful. God gives the witness of each. Time would fail to tell of David. David was not a stranger to a conflict. From the moment God began a work of grace manifestly and he was anointed by Samuel, he had a conflict throughout his life. He had to live by faith on the Son of God. But he knew the mercy at times in the midst of that conflict and was enabled here and there to speak of the mercy and enabling of patience to run the race that was set before him. O, he could say, "The Lord delivered me from the lion and the bear, and who is this uncircumcised Philistine?" Ah, you will have an uncircumcised Philistine and he is a great giant, he is a giant in the way. But sometimes, when faith is given, you can run with patience, and say, "The Lord will bring him down. The Lord will bring down every giant, He will give me conquering grace."

Then the apostle says "Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith". When our eyes are off Jesus, what a sad condition we are in! What a prey we are to all the beasts of the forest! It is the night season and they come out. But sometimes, when the Lord gives you faith to look to Christ, O what wonders are wrought! Why, you are amazed. Have you never been? David says "I was

a wonder unto many". He was the greatest wonder unto himself, that the weak stripling should see such power made manifest, all the beasts of the forest going to their place and he enabled to go through. That is faith. O, sometimes, just to feel a little of it in lively exercise in your heart, sinner, when the Spirit of God brings this grace, "Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith".

"Who for the joy that was set before Him". Ah, it was the joy of His church in heaven, the travail of His soul, those for whom He came, laid His glory aside, tabernacled with men, and suffered an ignominious death and, by that very means, and by that very means alone, to bring His church to glory. Wonderful mercy! great love, my friends, in that conflict with sin, with hell, to see the Lord Jesus Christ a suffering Saviour, yet see by faith this mercy: "For the joy that was set before Him". He set His face stedfastly to go to Jerusalem, knowing what should be accomplished. "How am I straitened till it be accomplished" He says of the baptism with which He was to be baptised, even the suffering of death. Yet the joy that was set before Him. O, sometimes, just to look into that! "We have not yet resisted unto blood". That is a mercy if, poor, trembling sinner, you know what it is to battle with the powers of darkness and your own evil heart, when faith is given and in lively exercise, to see through the Author and Finisher of your faith you will come to a good end. Why, that is an exercise of mind to some of you. Shall I really come to a good end? And you do not want any man to give you a wrong interpretation. You do not want any man to flatter you and tell you falsely that you have been in the church so long, and you have been attending, and so forth, surely after all that it will be well. You know too well, some of you, that you might do all that and go to hell. But there is one thing that the Lord will make known to you, poor sinner, He will make known to you that have fled for refuge to the Lord Jesus - He will open up this truth - that you cannot fail. As sure as God in His mercy gives a poor sinner that enabling by faith to look to Jesus as the Author and Finisher, he will never fail. That is a mercy. There are moments when you need a real encouragement, and that encouragement is the work of Christ made known, and it is by the You that are in the conflict know what the power of His truth. witnesses proved, and know what it is to have everything against you,

and nothing but God's own work within can stand; there is nothing else can stand. I believe, to a living child of God, there is a shaking of everything, and there is only one thing can stand, and that is the power of living faith which is God given. That is a mercy. Some would have us almost to believe as though we had faith in ourselves, as though we had to draw it up from somewhere, but it is God given. Some of you know the mercy of that when the Lord gives you that faith to look to Jesus, enables you to look out of self unto Him and see the mercy that is in Him, and that He is the Author and Finisher of faith, that He has accomplished it. And so, whatever you go through, whatever the conflict is in your soul, there will be a good issue.

"Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame". Ah, and you will sinner; faith can despise the shame. There is a shame to a real profession to the flesh. The flesh There is that in us that would be ashamed, but hates Christ. sometimes, when faith is in exercise, you can bear that shame. When you can look to Jesus you can. I hope I have known it for a moment. That just took my mind back to some years ago - I hope that was real when I felt I could; I felt a willingness. Ah, but there are many days of darkness and exercise of mind, and a need of faith to look to Jesus. "Looking unto Jesus". O when you can see by mercy and by faith in exercise what He has done - "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross". Although He died an ignominious death, He knew in every part of it what the issue would be. - I say that reverently - the victory to be gained, the church freed from sin and from hell, every power broken, and though the devil molests - he did with Job - he could not drag him down to hell. No, he could not. He was God's child, and even in the midst of that bitter conflict the Lord gave Him faith to look to Him. "I know that my Redeemer liveth". sometimes that is a real comfort to the soul, when you have nothing else to look to. What had he to look to? Not a person, nothing in his home; everything was gone. But there was a man that was enabled, by faith, to look to Christ. "I know that my Redeemer liveth and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold and not another."

The grace of faith! O my friends, what a strength!. And this is for poor, polluted, hell-deserving sinners who are made to feel it and brought by divine grace into a union to Christ, who have no hope but And because you have no hope but in Christ, you are tempted, you are tried, you are exercised, and in your daily walk, conduct, and conversation, you know what it is to have trial. Yet here is mercy. "Let us run with patience", the conflict is not for long. It may be sharp, it may be severe, it may be in your person will be in some form. It may sometimes be in providence. You may have that which is, from time to time, a reminder of the solemn reality of death. God knows what each has. Yet, my friends, sometimes when as by living faith, that very path brings you to see the mercy of God and His eternal kingdom, you say, "I would not be a stranger still to that celestial place". You can say with the apostle then "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. " He was given grace to run with patience, to see that it was for his good, and that ultimately he would be brought out and safely landed in eternal glory. So it was mercy. When he felt that buffeting of Satan, and that thorn pricked him, at the same time, faith was in exercise to see the blessedness of Christ, His perfect work, and that he would be found in glory. O, you have sometimes seen mercy and love inscribed in the very things that are painful, galling to the flesh, and in those things that would drag you down. In that very place to see mercy, as faith is in exercise in Christ. Dear Mr Hart says

### It lives and labours under load Though damped, it never dies

O when you are enabled to look to Jesus and sometimes feel the conflict will not be long. Eighty years is not long compared to eternity. Some of God's dear children, as these witnesses, have had much trial. I can look to one or two that I have buried. One particularly comes to my mind who was turned eighty and as he was laid in the grave, I felt that he was liberated from sorrow and tribulation and now, in the blessedness, I have felt it has been but a short life really. There seemed to be so much crowded in, so much to exercise the mind, many tears.

# They wrestled hard, as we do now With sins and doubts and fears

You may wet your couch with tears many times, poor sinner, the conflict may sometimes seem severe, and the devil tempts you that you will only be like Cain - I know what that is - and be made a gazingstock in profession in the world, but O, when the Lord just comes in in His mercy, and gives you faith in Christ, you can then run with patience. Isn't it wonderful sometimes, just in that very place, and those tears then turn to tears of joy, they melt your heart, and you can say in truth "Lord, choose Thou the way". You would not have it altered, you would not have a thing altered. That does not mean you will not continue to beg the Lord to undertake in all matters that concern you, relative or church matters, or personal matters, but you would not have anything altered. You can say "It is well", feel it is, and "faith eyes the promise sure". But when our eye is off Christ, then what confusion!

The Lord grant us this grace. You that love the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only hope of your salvation, you may be in much trial, in a manner that could not be described to another, but you know it, and it is painful. The Lord grant this grace. The witnesses declared God's faithfulness, His mercy, His love, the need of faith, the perfect bringing home to glory. They were brought home; Jacob was. The years of his pilgrimage, he told Pharaoh, were few. sinner. He had seen much conflict, but he was brought through. "And Israel said, It is enough". God is faithful, that God that gave me faith brought me out, has been with me all my journey through. He is faithful, I shall be with Him. And all he had to do was to put his feet into the bed and give up the ghost. That is mercy and it will be with you poor sinner who have fled for refuge to Christ, and who know what it is to be in conflict. But, may the Lord, while we are here, give us patience to run the race that is set before us, and help, from time to time. We do not know what we may come into. Dear Bunyan says

When one trouble's o'er Another doth him seize

and the poet says

# Every day brings something new Zion's troubles to renew

We would not look into the future, we would not desire to know it, but it is a mercy that the Lord reigns, and when He gives faith in His own dear Son to His dear people, there is an enabling to run with patience and a looking to that glorious habitation. The Lord grant this to us! I would just like to bear on that for a minute, but I must leave it. O there is a City, it is not a myth, no wild fancy of our brains that we follow. The faith of God's elect is real, and the end of that faith is eternal bliss. May the Lord grant it!

AMEN.

