

Cabanatuan Addendum; Capacity Righteousness Requires Ability & Skill; the Royal Law, Jas 4:8; Don't Judge but Discern; Choices: Serve God or Self?

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An old soldier's story

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St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Pinckneyville, Ill. • As a soldier in the Philippines a few months before war erupted in the Pacific, Albert Brown saw it coming. And today, at the age of 102 and believed to be the oldest American survivor of the Bataan Death March, Brown said he still can't get the war out of his mind.

In a letter home dated Oct. 10, 1941, he wrote, "From my point of view, I cannot see how trouble can be averted. It's as inevitable as if it were written on the wall."

On Dec. 8, 1941, war came to the Philippines. Aerial attacks were followed by a ground invasion and U.S. and Filipino forces soon had to retreat from bases in and around Manila to the Bataan peninsula in southern Luzon.

Despite short rations and supplies, the Allied forces battled the Japanese invaders into the spring of 1942.

"They were unable to supply the troops with enough to eat," Brown said. "We ate rats, worms, birds, flies, anything we could find. The troops physically were in very bad shape."

War memories come back to him, seemingly at random, when he lies down at night. Some good, some bad. Often, he said, he thinks about people he met briefly during the war and never saw again.

Maj. Gen. Edward King, who commanded the U.S. and Filipino forces on Bataan, surrendered to the Japanese on April 9.

What would later be called the Death March began the next day, when about 70,000 troops - American and Filipino - were ordered to begin walking north along the eastern coast of Bataan to Camp O'Donnell, more than 65 miles away.

Atrocities began almost immediately, Brown said.

"My outfit passed a prisoner who was 17 or 18 years old," he said. "A Japanese soldier took his samurai sword and lopped off his head. It sort of got us going."

The prisoners, some wounded, most already weakened by disease and malnutrition, got little food or water during the six-day march. Daytime temperatures topped 100 degrees. Stragglers were beaten or killed. Once, Brown lagged back a bit and was near the rear of the column.

"A soldier jabbed me in the rear end with his bayonet and said 'speedo,'" Brown said. "From then on, I was never at the back of the pack again."

There were artesian wells every mile or so along the roadway, but the Japanese beat or killed prisoners who tried to get to them.

"The Filipinos (civilians) would try to throw food to us, but the soldiers would beat them if they could catch them," Brown said.

The marchers passed thousands of comrades, dead and dying, who had fallen along the way.

Estimates of the number of deaths vary, but only about 54,000 of the 70,000 who began the march reached the destination. It's unknown how many prisoners escaped during the march.

The prisoners' misery was far from over. Thousands more died in POW camps in the Philippines, in "hell ships" taking them to labor camps in China or Japan, or in those camps.

For two years, Brown was held in a camp at Cabanatuan in the Philippines.

"My normal weight was 200," he said. "In the camp, I got down to 90 pounds."

In 1944, Brown was taken with other prisoners to a camp on Hokkaido, one of the Japanese home islands, where they were forced to clean ships.

He and the other prisoners were freed at the war's end in 1945.

They were flown to Guam and then to San Francisco. Upon arrival, Brown said, "everybody got out of the plane and knelt down and kissed the earth. It was a good feeling."

Brown's travails were far from over.

"I couldn't see, my lungs were bad, my intestines were bad," he said. He spent two years recuperating at Fitzsimmons Army Hospital in Denver.

Now living with a daughter in Pinckneyville, Brown describes his more pleasant war memories with a twinkle in his eye and a subtle sense of humor. He says he's surprised to feel as well as he usually does and surprised that he's able to walk, albeit slowly.

Born in Nebraska, Brown was a star athlete at Abraham Lincoln High School in Council Bluffs, Iowa, before earning a dental degree in 1927 at Creighton University and joining a dental practice in Council Bluffs.

Brown had been a member of the Army ROTC in high school and college and was called to active duty in 1935. He left behind his practice and his family, a wife and three children.

Brown entered the Dental Corps as a first lieutenant and spent time at Fort Snelling in Minnesota, Camp Robinson in Arkansas and Camp Leonard Wood in Missouri before shipping out to the Philippines in September 1941, just three months before Japan attacked U.S. posts there and in Hawaii.

Discharged in 1947, Brown never returned to dentistry. Continuing problems with his back and neck would not allow the standing and stooping that dentistry required, he said.

Brown said he doesn't hate the Japanese but wonders why the United States treats its defeated enemies so well.

He said America was woefully unprepared for World War II, in terms of training and equipment.

"We were so awful," he said. "Every camp I went to was in disarray."

Brown said war exposes bad policy and planning.

"Everything has to come out of Washington," he said. "Sometimes, they fail badly."

14. Capacity has to do with one's spiritual ability in the areas of aptitude and skill. The two power options provide the aptitude and accumulation of doctrine results in spiritual skills.

15. Capacity has to do with having these principles in the *kardia*, retaining them in long-term memory, and applying them to life and circumstances.
16. This process enables the believer to have the wisdom to manage his life: (1) overcome temptations, (2) resolve problems, and (3) make good decisions from a position of strength.
17. The manifestation that the believer is living in the rarified atmosphere of spiritual adulthood is his ability to keep the royal law:

James 4:8 - If you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing a right thing in a right way.

18. This verse requires the believer to love those with whom he comes in contact in the same fashion that he loves himself.
19. Love of self here does not refer to narcissism, self-centeredness, or conceit. It makes reference to the advanced believer's tranquility of soul. If you are comfortable with yourself then you can be comfortable with those around you.
20. This means that having spiritual self-esteem you are able to deal with others from sophisticated problem-solving devices: you do not engage in mental attitude sins but rather look on others as children of God or prospects to become so.
21. How they act and behave is their freedom to do and although you may be able to discern character traits you do not judge them but rather allow God to prosecute the case.
22. You are comfortable with yourself through capacity righteousness which allows you to be comfortable with others at whatever stage or status of the spiritual life they possess.
23. Capacity righteousness is dependent upon the believer being consistent with rebound, habitual in his study of divine policies in Bible class, and execution of these principles to the affairs of his daily life.

II. Capacity Righteousness and the Spiritual Life.

1. Capacity righteousness is a challenge to the believer following salvation. Between the time he is saved and the day he dies he must make consistent choices about whom he will willingly submit as a bonds slave.
2. Choice one is to endeavor to grow in grace: willing subordination to biblical directives. This requires rebound and spiritual growth through Bible study for the purpose of learning about God, His policies, and how He can best be served.
3. Choice two is to make conscious decisions against these things: willing subordination to the desires of the sinful nature and the temptations of *cosmos diabolicus*. Although saved this individual never develops an interest in learning about God's love for him, or how he could improve himself by learning how to think on a sophisticated level, or how he might be of some service to the God who saved him.
4. Those who select choice number one spend maximum time in status quo spirituality and develop a capacity for blessings as their inventory of righteous standards increases.

5. Those who select choice number two spend maximum time in status quo carnality and develop a capacity for the details of life that bring them moments of quasi happiness or physical pleasure but no enlargement of their capacity to think. True happiness and meaningful pleasure are the products of thought.
6. Capacity righteousness involves advanced knowledge about how God thinks and enables the one who possesses it to come into harmonious rapport with God's plan and purpose for his life.
7. With this comes self-discipline empowered by the Holy Spirit and guided by divine policies: on the one hand, the ability to deny temptations to satisfy one's base desires and, on the other hand, the ability to forego legitimate pursuits that would distract from the top priority of one's spiritual advance.