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## **A LETTER AND ITS ANSWER.**

DEAR SIR: – It seems to be the work of kind providence which has put into my hands both of your pamphlets, "Food" and "Tabernacle," and two numbers of the TOWER, from all of which I obtained some of the most beautiful explanations of Scripture that I ever met with. The system of God's plans as therein presented is grand and sublime indeed; yet in some respects I think it to disagree with my Bible.

I respectfully invite your attention to some points of seeming disagreement, with an humble desire that you may be able to harmonize them. They are: –

First. Your system of interpretation appears destitute of reasons for sinners to "flee from the wrath to come."... We find in the Bible a beautiful equilibrium and balancing, of God's love and mercy on the one hand, and His holiness and justice on the other. "Felix trembled" – God "will in no wise clear the guilty," etc. These statements your system of interpretation seems to ignore and render impracticable.

Second. The Bible positively declares a second apostasy, or falling away (Rev. 20:7-9), after the Millennium; this your system of interpretation ignores and would render impossible.

Third. Scripture positively places the general resurrection, not only after the Millennium, but even after the second apostasy, while the harmony of your teachings demands it during the Millennial age.

If in those three points (so far as I have now noticed) your system could be shown to be in harmony with the Bible, I should joyfully embrace your teachings as a grand advance in theology,

and, according to my opportunity and ability, I should preach it, the balance of my days.

Hoping soon to see the requisite explanation of these matters from your pen, either by letter or through the TOWER, I remain,

Yours respectfully, \_\_\_\_\_.

Stones Prairie, Ill.

### **OUR REPLY.**

It gives us pleasure to answer the queries of those whose letters savor so much of the Spirit of Christ, and believing that this communication may be of interest to others, we answer through the TOWER. To save space we will not repeat the questions. Please keep them well in mind.

In reply to your first proposition, we assure you that we do preach a "wrath to come," and more than that, we preach that the "Day of vengeance of our God" has already come. We refer you to "Food for Thinking Christians," Part IV.; also pages 51-53, 72-74 and 120-124. We very much question if this subject of wrath and trouble, coming upon the nominal Church and the world, is referred to half as often in any other publications. But you mean, Why do we not teach, as the mass of Christians do, an eternity of pain and agony to all except the saints? We answer, because God's Word does not teach it. We teach "a just recompense of reward"; but the difficulty is, that under the heathenish doctrines which, during the dark ages, became engrafted upon Christianity, a just punishment for sin has been lost sight of, and the Church has coined out of the symbols and figures of Revelation and some of the parables and dark sayings of Jesus, such a fiendish doctrine on this subject, and have so constantly held this libel on the character of God and his Word before the mind, that it takes some time for a thoroughly indoctrinated person to be able to come back, to a proper

appreciation of justice and to scriptural ideas concerning the nature of the wrath to come.

It is exactly our teaching that God "will in no wise clear the guilty." In harmony with his condemnation, "DEATH passed upon all men" [but not eternal LIFE in torment]. In this was manifested the justice of God, and that holiness which could not permit an imperfect thing to exist. His love for his creature was there, also, but was not yet manifested. Four thousand years later – in the fullness of time – the love of God was manifest in the gift of his Son, who paid our penalty (DEATH), and all men are thereby justified to live again, and he tells us that in his due time "all they that are in their graves suffering the penalty pronounced – DEATH – [but not torment] shall hear his voice and come forth, some to life [perfect life, having **[R500 : page 2]** been justified by faith and passed their trial or judgment in this present life] and some to judgment [krisis – TRIAL].

"Felix trembled," but not from any recorded words of Paul relative to eternal torment. No, we claim that Paul taught, as we are teaching, that the time is coming in which every wicked act and every good act will receive a JUST recompense of reward. Felix knew, doubtless, of crimes and injustice of which he had been guilty, and he therefore trembled.

But another thing should be borne in mind when judging of our teachings: It is that we are living in a peculiar time, when some of the special features of the gospel are properly made more prominent than others, by all the faithful and wise servants whom our Lord has appointed to give to His household "Meat in due season" (Matt. 24:45). We stand where the severity of God has been made too much of, and His goodness and love almost overlooked; hence it is that our teachings have seemed to some at first sight, to show only the love of God. A reference to the present issue of the

TOWER and previous ones under the head of "The Plagues," etc., will show that we give evidence [R501 : page 2] also of the severity of God. But a correct understanding of the just severity of God gives no indication of the fiendish character ascribed to him by the current theology of the various sects. We find in his word, and therefore teach, that God's punishments are designed as corrective, and that only the finally incorrigible will be destroyed with the Second Death.

Again, from our standpoint we see that the special work of separating from the world and from mere believers a "peculiar people" to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, and thus to become joint-sacrifices and joint-heirs with Him, is ended; and it only remains to encourage and assist the living members of this peculiar people, to persevere in the fulfilment of their consecration vows: and to testify to the world, to all that will hear, the breadth and scope of this great salvation for ALL mankind; that the Kingdom of Heaven is indeed at hand, not in its incipient stage, as was the case in the beginning of this age, but in its actual completeness and glory, it is even now coming into power. This special work now, finds its parallel in the special work of Jesus at the close of the Jewish age. His ministry did not aim to present the penalties of the Law, since he was about to bear that for them, but to introduce and prepare his followers to receive the blessings and favors of the Gospel age.

Your Second proposition is, we think, an unintentional misstatement of our position. We do believe, in what you term the apostasy of Rev. 20:7-9, though quite likely we do not teach it as you have been inclined to look at it, owing to the bias you have received from current theology. We now refer you to "Food," page 124, lines three to eight from top. We give that Scripture the less mention because we believe that none whom we address will be there.

Your Third point is a very general error, we think, and arises from a misunderstanding of the symbols and general arrangement of the Book of Revelation. Commencing with chapter 20:1, and continuing to chapter 22:5, we believe to be six different views or presentations of the same period of time – the Millennial age. All these views are valuable, as they present different sides or phases of the same glorious kingdom of God. The first shows the restraining of evil for a thousand years, and its little season of permitted triumph at its close (Rev. 20:1-3). The second view (Rev. 20:4-10) shows the exaltation of the saints, their reign of a thousand years, and the destruction of the incorrigible at its close.

The third view (Rev. 20:11-15) is a representation of the trial of the world before the white or pure judgment seat. It is at the establishment of justice and right in the earth that the present (symbolic) heavens and earth flee away, giving place to new heavens (governments) and new earth (society). Then the books (Scriptures) will be opened, made plain, so that a "wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein"; and the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the sea; then the world will have its trial – being "judged according to their works" instead of by the standard of the Church's trial, now in progress – "according to your faith." Here another "Book of Life" is opened – the one now being filled – with the names of the heirs of GLORY, HONOR and IMMORTALITY; and the new Book of Life is the record of those of the world, who, during their trial, will be accounted worthy of perfect human existence everlastingly, all others being cut off in the second death, symbolically termed the lake of fire.

The fourth view (Rev. 21:1-8) represents the blessedness of the Millennial age when the New Jerusalem (the glorified Church – the Bride) will be among men as their government and God's representative: to remove their sorrows, pains and troubles by

making all things new, resulting in the giving of the water of life to the obedient, and second death to the disobedient, as in the preceding views.

The fifth view (Rev. 21:9-27) shows this glorified church more especially; and the fact that the light (truth) which shines from it will be the guide of the nations (v. 24), the sequel to this view being that those improving the opportunity will come into, or become associated, in the Kingdom of God – the earthly phase of it – while workers of iniquity are destroyed, as in the other views – their second death.

The sixth view (Rev. 22:1-5) shows, under the symbol river, that the blessing of the Lord is to be through the spread of truth to mankind during that Millennial age. It will proceed from the City of God – the glorified Church – and results in the complete blotting out of the curse and the restoring of mankind to communion with God.

In conclusion, we would refer you to Prov. 2:4,5. "If thou seekest truth as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou...find the knowledge of God."

The Lord will bless every real truth-seeker – every Israelite indeed – for such alone truth was written, and to such alone it will be revealed. May you know the truth – be filled with its spirit, and be made free by it; then, indeed, you will be a minister of it, both now and in the ages to come.

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