

GROWING IN GRACE.

Bristol, England.

MY DEAR BROTHER: – Your letter of Aug. 28th came duly, for which receive my warmest thanks. I was both strengthened and refreshed by it. Just at the time it arrived I was well nigh weary of "the way," fightings without and fears within; finding that when I would do good, evil is present with me, and being defeated at nearly every point. I find now that I had left my place of security – *abiding in him* – and therefore was exposed to the wiles and malice of the enemy. My armor was not firmly buckled on; but he has so tenderly and lovingly quickened me through your letter and restored unto me the "joy of his salvation," and is now upholding me, that I am as a giant refreshed and more conscious than ever that he that watcheth over Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. Blessed be his name.

I inclose a pamphlet for your perusal, and will tell you why I wrote it. I was a member of the "Brethren," and as such used occasionally to give a "Gospel address" on Sunday evening at their meeting. I know now that it was not the *truth* that I preached, but tradition. For a long time my mind had been exercised concerning the truth of orthodoxy, and on one Sunday evening in the spring I went and preached upon 2 Cor. 4:3-6, dwelling particularly on the fact that the Bible was the Gospel referred to. That was the third time in a few weeks that I had spoken about the same words, insisting that it was the truth or else a forgery – no middle path. During the following week the truth shone clear; the eyes of my understanding being opened I saw clearly that eternal "torment" was blasphemy. During that same week I was invited to address a meeting on the following Sunday. I knew not what to do; if I went it would be out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth would speak; but being afraid that I might cause confusion, and so hinder the reception of the truth, I cried to the Lord for guidance, and decided not to go without first acquainting the brother who invited me

of my change of views, knowing that Paul "saw them that were of reputation privately, lest he had run in vain," and also that although free from the error, I was not then, as now, built up in the truth and able to offer clear evidence for my decision. This led to a correspondence and some interviews. I showed my evidence, and they called it false doctrine. I asked one to read "Food;" he did so, and tried to prove it wrong, but failed.

I was counseled to send in my resignation. At first I had intended merely to say that my views were changed concerning certain doctrines, and that I resigned; but thinking it would be a good opportunity for boldly declaring what I believed to be the truth, and to witness for it, I wrote the enclosed paper, and on showing it to my brother, who has been quickened by the truth, and who is as devoted to the cause as myself, he expressed a wish to have it printed, and bore all the expense of 1,000 copies for free circulation. I put in an extract from the TOWER, as it bore so pointedly on the subject, and trust you will approve of my attempt to spread abroad the truth by referring the readers to the TOWER for further reading. I have enclosed two copies, and shall be most grateful if you will please correct anything that you perceive wrong there, and return it at your earliest convenience. I may add that my resignation was not accepted by the "Brethren," but they held a church meeting and solemnly excommunicated me. But "*What* shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

Very truly yours in Christ,

_____.

The article below is in substance the Tract published by the Brother to which reference is made in the above letter. It brought we are sure a blessing upon the Brother who wrote, and also upon the Brother who had it published, as every sacrifice of time and money made purely for the truth's sake brings a blessing on the sacrificer.

This Brother's case reminds us forcibly of Jesus' words in Luke 18:13,14. Though steeped in sin, he was more easily reached by God's Word than many Pharisaic professors about him covered with the filthy rags of self-righteousness, and bound and blinded by the human tradition of some popular sect. Thank God that the day is dawning, in which all this blindness and the blinding influences will be removed forever.

[To appreciate the article below fully, turn to and examine all texts cited. – EDITOR.] **[R802 : page 6]**

THE BIBLE VS. "ORTHODOXY."

To the Reader. – My mind having been greatly exercised by the following doctrines of so called "Orthodoxy," I searched to see what the Scriptures say, with the following result. When I penned these lines, I had no intention whatever of having them printed, as they were simply written to send to the pastor of the Chapel where I used to worship, but showing them to a brother in Christ, he expressed his wish to have them printed. This has been done, in the hope that any who have been seeking for the *truth*, may by the grace of God, be assisted in finding it, and realize as I myself do most gratefully, "Ye shall know the *truth*, and the truth shall make you free."

I am yours in the love of God, and in the glorious liberty of the gospel of Christ,

G. C.

IMMORTALITY OF MAN.

I find no scripture to lead me to believe this doctrine; quite the reverse, man is never described as having an endless existence. "Your fathers, where are they, and the prophets, do they live forever?" Zech. 1:5, and as to man having a conscious existence after the breath leaves the body, I do not believe it, not until the resurrection, "for in death there is no remembrance of thee." Psalm 6:5. "His breath goeth forth,

he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish." Psalm 14:6, "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." Eccles. 9:10. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. Eccles. 12:7. "If Christ be not raised, ye are yet in your sins, then they also which have fallen asleep in Christ are perished.... what advantageth it me if the dead rise not, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." 1 Cor. 15:17,18,32. If there is consciousness after the breath leaves the body, there should have been consciousness before the breath entered in, (kindly examine this). I know that Luke 16:23-31, may be argued against this, but are you sure that our Lord is speaking of individuals here and not nations, Jewish and Gentile. He was speaking to the Pharisees, verses 14,15, kindly compare rich man, verse 19, (Jewish nation), with Ezekiel 16:1-14, and the same denunciation is uttered in Matt. 21:41-43, and its accomplishment recorded in Rom. 11. Abraham's bosom, (place of favor); Gentile brought in, Israel broken off, and a gulf fixed, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. The Jews as a nation are dead, and being cast abroad in the earth, they are being tormented in the flame of persecution. Wherever they are, there is being fulfilled the prophecy of Moses, and our Lord Jesus, Deut. 8:19,20, Deut. 28:62-68. The Gentile also ceased to be a beggar, (poor) and they were brought into a place of favor, (for description of Gentiles as beggars or dogs, see narrative of Syro-Phoenician woman, Matt. 15:20-28). Immortality is one of the promised blessings, and is not possessed by natural man, else if possessed by him, why seek for it? Compare Rom. 2:7 with 1 Cor. 15:53,54.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

I find no Scriptural proof of this doctrine quite the reverse. "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; *and* one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." 1 Cor. 8:6. I am convinced that God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ are *two beings*, not one. I find no Scripture speaking of the

Lord Jesus as "God the Son," but as the "Son of God." Part of 1 John 5:7, is evidently spurious (left out in the Revised Version), and manifestly inserted to support the doctrine of the Trinity. In John 8:16-18, he says, "I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. It is also written in your law the testimony of two men is true, I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me." You may quote "I and my Father are one," undoubtedly they are one in purpose and nature, but not in being, and he also prayed that the members of his body "all may be one in us" (John 17:21), even as we are one (verse 22). So "God is light;" Christ said, "I am the light of the world," also "ye are the lights of the world," all partaking of the same nature, but not one in being, and differing in degree.

Were I to believe that God and Christ are one being, I am shut in to the fact that all the members of the body of Christ will ultimately lose all personal identity in Christ, and he in God. Or else if Christ be equal with God, as the members of his body will have glorious bodies like his (Phil. 3:21), be co-heirs with him (Rom. 8:17), have power with him (Rev. 2:26, and 3:21), and be partakers also of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4); in fact to be like him (1 John 3:2), they will eventually be equal with God too. Such creature glorifying, and God dishonoring doctrine is not of God, according to 1 Cor. 15:27,28 – "For he hath put all things under his feet." But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted who did put all things under him, and when all things are subdued unto him, then shall the Son himself be subject unto him, that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. His equality is plainly taught in authorized version of Phil. 2:6; "Who being in the form of God (spiritual form), thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but in margin of the Revised Version and in note at end, where the American translators retain the marginal reading of this same passage, the exact opposite meaning is given – he "counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped." This is in harmony with the whole passage and the result, verse 9 – "God also [**R803 : page 6**] hath highly exalted him." Had he been on an equality with God before, how could he have been highly exalted after?

This harmonizes too with Prov. 8:24. "When there were no depths I was brought forth." Col. 1:15. "The firstborn (chief) of every creature." Rev. 3:14 – "The beginning of the creation of God." John 1:1 – "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." This is clearly explained in 1 Cor. 8:5,6 – "For though there be, that are called Gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many), yet to us there is but one God the Father," and the same word in the original, "Theos," I see is used in 2 Cor. 4:4, in reference to Satan as the god or ruler of this age; so there is no conflict, but harmony. And in John 5:18, the Jews asserted, that he made himself equal with God, which he most emphatically denied in verse 19: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself." Now use that expression in reference to the Father, and the denial is apparent. Would any say **[R803 : page 7]** of the Father, "the Father can do nothing of himself?"

RESPECTING THE WEEKLY PARTAKING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

I find no Scriptural evidence for this anywhere. In Acts 20:7, a meal is evidently spoken of, as in chap. 2:42-46. I find no command or example from our Lord or any of his Apostles, for a weekly observance; and I am convinced it is a yearly observance. In 1 Cor. 5:7,8 – "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, let us keep the feast." Our Lord altered the manner, but not the time. The early church met on the first day of the week. – John 20:19, but no mention is made of the feast. In Luke 22:15, the Lord said, "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer;" verse 19, – "this do in remembrance of me," verse 22 – "this cup is the new testament" or covenant. How often the old covenant was to be celebrated is plainly stated, Ex. 13:10, "Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season, from year to year," and as He has not altered the time, I dare not. Paul said, "as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come." The cup was not mentioned in connection with the First-day gatherings and meals in the accounts

in Acts. And as Israel, when they ate the passover yearly, did show forth the death of the lamb, their passover, so with us in the antitype: we do show forth that which was accomplished by which God in justice passes over us; and as there is but one anniversary of a birth or a death in a year, how strange to celebrate it weekly. And though we are not *commanded* to observe it at all, we being not under THE LAW, but under favor, yet it is our privilege or favor to observe the ANNIVERSARY.

ETERNAL TORMENT.

This I believe to be the most blasphemous and God-dishonoring doctrine ever preached. Let us examine it briefly from three standpoints.

1st. – If eternal torment is the punishment of the ungodly or finally impenitent sinner, then he who took the sinners' place must bear the sinners' penalty (Isa. 53:6 – "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all), viz.: eternal torment; and as Christ did not bear that (eternal torment), what does it say then but that Christ was not the sinners' substitute. Such a gospel as that, though an angel from heaven should preach it, I dare not believe it. But what do the Scriptures say but that "the wages of sin is death," that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures," as he explained to the disciples going to Emmaus. (Luke 24:25-27.) Yes, thanks be to our God, "he came to seek and save that which was lost." Mankind had lost life. The sentence of death having passed on all men, he said, "My flesh will I give for the life of the world." The Psalmist is clear on this point: "Who redeemeth thy life from destruction." (Psa. 103:4.) So, as by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. 15:21); "some to a resurrection of life (glorified), and some to a resurrection of judgment (discipline) (John 5:29) – not damnation, as in the old version, but judgment (discipline), as in the revised version. Then, and not till then, will be the world's probation; then, in the time of restitution (Acts 3:21-23), "he that will not hear that prophet (Christ) shall be destroyed

(second death) from among the people; not preserved in torments and disobedience, but utterly destroyed – everlasting punishment – DEATH being the wages or punishment.

2d. – What a door is opened to the atheist by this horrible doctrine, eternal torment. He will argue thus, and rightly, too: You represent that God is just, yet when he sends his Son in the flesh to bear the punishment for sin (Isa. 53:6), his sufferings terminate at death, but the sinner's go on through the eternal ages.

3d. – Weak Christians may reason thus: If eternal torment is the punishment for sin, as Christ did not bear that, how do I know but what I shall have to suffer it? But thanks be to our God, he can be just, yet the justifier of him that believeth on Jesus. The sentence was death, my dear Lord and Master died that I might live, and he gave his word, that believing, I might have life through his name (John 20:31); and, thank God, this is the word by which the gospel is preached unto you. (1 Pet. 1:25).

We close with an extract from ZION'S WATCH TOWER, as follows: –

MORTAL AND IMMORTAL.

"These words are usually given a very uncertain meaning. Wrong ideas relative to their meaning produce erroneous views of subjects with which they stand connected in general and scriptural use. The definition of *mortal* is a state or condition of being *liable to death*, not a condition of death, but a condition in which death is a possibility. The common but erroneous idea of *mortal* is a state or condition in which *death is unavoidable*. The common definition of *immortal* is more nearly correct. The word immortal signifies *not* mortal, hence the very construction of the words indicates their *true* definition. It is because of the prevalence of a wrong idea of the meaning of the word mortal, that so many are confused when trying to determine whether Adam was mortal or immortal before the transgression. They reason

that *if he was immortal*, God would not have said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," for if immortal it would be *impossible* for him to die. To this we assent, it is a logical conclusion. On the other hand say they, if he was mortal, (their idea of mortal – a state in which death is unavoidable) wherein could consist the threat or penalty of the statement "Thou shalt surely die!" since if mortal, (according to their idea of the term) *he could not have* avoided death anyhow. The difficulty, it will be perceived, is in the *false* meaning given to the word *mortal*. Apply the correct definition and all is clear and plain. Adam was mortal, (*i.e.* – in a condition in which death was a *possibility*). He had life in full and perfect measure, yet *not inherent life*. His was a life *sustained* by "every tree of the garden" save the one tree forbidden, and so long as he continued in obedience to, and in harmony with, his Maker, his life was secure – the sustaining element would not be denied. Thus seen, Adam had life, and death was entirely avoidable, yet he was in such a condition that death was possible – he was *mortal*. The question arises then, if Adam was mortal and on trial, was he on trial for immortality? The general answer would be, Yes. We answer, No. His trial was to see whether he was worthy or unworthy of life. Since it was nowhere promised, that, if obedient, he should have a prize, we are bound to leave all such speculation out of the question. He was promised *a continuance of the blessing then enjoyed* so long as obedient, and threatened with *destruction* if disobedient. Nowhere in Scripture is it stated that man is immortal. While on the contrary, it is a quality which is ascribed *only* to the *Divine Nature* – to Jehovah, to Jesus, in his present highly exalted condition, and to the Church, the "little flock," the "Lamb's wife," and "joint heir," when glorified with him. And not only is this true of the English word "*immortal*" and its corresponding word "*incorruptible*," but it is equally true of the original Greek term which these translate.

Some years ago a dear friend of mine wrote to me, saying he had heard I had taken hold of some strange views regarding the doom of the finally impenitent, and he would like to know what these were. I

replied it was quite true that my mind had been changed on this sad subject. I no longer believed in the eternity of future torment, but held that the wicked would be cut off everlastingly after the Judgment of the Great Day, (the Millennial day). I said that this light that had broken in upon me from God's word, had made our Father in heaven dearer to me than ever, and the Bible a clearer book than it had been before. My friend immediately answered that he was satisfied with the orthodox belief upon the matter, and he was sure I ought to be. In order to win me back to the old path he would like to have a debate with me by correspondence. And as I much appreciated his candor, kindness and Biblical knowledge, I at once asked him to begin the discussion *by proving from the Bible* the natural immortality of man. This would be the right course I said, as he was going to take the side of orthodoxy, and *that* affirmed that all men live for ever. In a day or so a note came informing me that my proposal was accepted; that many passages in God's word, stated that man was an immortal being, and that he would prepare a list of them for me. I knew full well he could not prepare such a list; however, I waited patiently to see what he would further say. About a fortnight after I received a letter inviting me very urgently [R804 : page 7] to go and see my friend, for he found himself in a dreadful difficulty regarding the task he had undertaken. Being able to arrange it I paid the requested visit. I never shall forget his look when he said that, to his amazement, *he could not find a single verse in all the Book, which declared man to be immortal; on the contrary in his search many turned up which taught the mortal nature of man.* He further said that the few passages which at all give plausibility to the *ordinary* view of future punishment appeared now most unsatisfactory to him; and a little further conversation revealed to me the fact that he already had received the *truth* of "Immortality in Christ alone." HOW HAD HE COME TO SEE IT? Simply by searching the Scripture on the subject. "These," said Jesus, "testify of Me." My friend had gone to them with the theory that he had received from the instructors of his childhood, and had searched for it in vain. Then throwing all prejudice overboard, he had sought *Truth*, and was rewarded. He was, *by the truth*, made free from former error.

Should any readers desire further reading matter on these and other long neglected Truths, they may obtain it "*free*" by addressing,
ZION'S WATCH TOWER, ETC.

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