

# Freedom or Bondage

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed in him, If ye continue in my word then are ye my disciples indeed and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." John 8:31,32,36.

## **Truth versus Tradition**

Tradition blinds the eyes and prevents investigation and search into matters - the Scriptures - and this tradition is upheld by the threat of being "Cast Out" of the Church or Ecclesia.

This booklet is written as a protest against such procedure by those of the Birmingham Constitution of Amended Statement of Faith of Doctrines to be rejected, Nos. 15, 16, 17. In the first place, those who have recently been withdrawn from or cast out of fellowship (results are the same) would like to qualify those three items numbered as above.

**No. 15.** That the works of the saints are tested and they are rewarded or suffer loss. (This proven later).

**No. 16.** That at the coming of Christ only those asleep in Him will be resurrected.

**No. 17.** That the dead in Christ rise in an immortal state.

It is undoubtedly true that this question of immortal resurrection is continually cropping up. Why? Because brethren are not satisfied. It would be interesting to get the statistics of how many have voluntarily or otherwise left the Birmingham Fellowship over this question. The two little books recently reprinted - viz:- Extract from Grattan Guinness's "Approaching End of the Age" and William Richmond's "Resurrection and Judgment of the Saints" have stirred matters up and we believe put before the brethren the truth on these subjects.

We know what it is to fear this curse of being threatened with excommunication if we dared to say, to speak, or make known that we did not believe in the tradition as set forth in the Constitution concerning the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and of His Brethren at His coming. We, in days of youth in the Fellowship, feared that possibly it would mean a cutting off from the Salvation that God offers in Christ Jesus. That Birmingham had the Keys of the Kingdom. It may be there are some who still feel that way, for although some don't approve of these actions against brethren they dare not say that they are in sympathy out they go. We speak from experience - when my own case and others were judged, "The Constitution" had been violated and this must be kept intact.

In the second place an Article had just appeared in the Magazine on this very subject. There was little or no appeal to the Bible on this important doctrine, but judged by tradition they were charged, and it appeared in the Intelligence - they were holding False Doctrine. But assertion is not proof. Now we read that the Scriptures are of no private interpretation. This neither rests at Rome nor Birmingham. And in John 7:16,17 we read:- "Jesus answered them and said, My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." Here then is the opportunity for individual knowledge, with prayerful search.

I believe it can be proven that Dr.Thomas changed his mind on this subject of Immortal Resurrection to mortal resurrection, and this latter idea has been maintained through the works issued from Birmingham.

Now we propose to criticize (or review) the penny pamphlet entitled, "Raised Incorruptible" by C.C.Walker.

Whilst we are charged with belittling the Judgment Seat and robbing Jesus of His honour as Judge (which God forbid we should) surely the Editor treats as of little value the reward by using the word "merely." The parable of the Talents and the rewards given were of great importance to the recipients; and Jesus says, in Revelation 22:12, "And behold I come quickly and my reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be." That the dead in Christ rise in an immortal state, the writer in page 1 paragraph 1 admits that this is apparently countenanced but is superficially construed. Most emphatically we say it does not destroy the sense of responsibility or circumspection, but on the contrary increases it, especially when we realize the motive power behind all our actions - Love, not Fear. We would refer you to the case of the man who was saved, yet his works were burned; they were evidently then bad - wood, hay, stubble. 1 Corinthians 3:12-15. This man loses his reward but is himself saved. So it is a judgment of works and not of the man. Why? Because Christ has already borne that for him.

Paragraph 2 - The Judgment Seat robbed of its terror. This savours very much of Hell fire torments, which used to make our knees knock together in mortal dread by the old-time Evangelists of Christendom. Surely the Editor doesn't mean so! While we read, "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." (Fear to offend). Further, in their own houses, yes, or in the field, one taken and the other left; changed in the twinkling of an eye. So it will be (worse than all) if the wicked are not there, but there is no record that they will be there. The gathering when the King sits on His Throne of His Glory is not the Judgment for the Saints. The word "mere" bestowal of gifts is unworthy of a Brother of Christ.

Page 3. Paragraph 1. Thessalonians 4. We do not so misconstrue this. We believe it is the righteous dead and the righteous living. But you destroy the comfort of these words by teaching a mortal resurrection. Paul "simply" means to teach the same as in 1 Corinthians 15; why leave out "and so shall they ever be with the Lord."? (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

Paragraph 2 - Part, portion or lot, does not alter the matter a jot. In a community an individual is a part, portion, of the whole.

Paragraph 4 - Here we go back to "sprout body process," which is absolutely foreign to the Scriptures. To quote the Sadducees here is poor proof, because they only ridiculed the resurrection. Quite true there will be a resurrection of the wicked, but "when?" is the question at issue. The two states are raised immortal and raised mortal - as was the widow's son, Jairus' daughter, Lazarus, etc.

The "mere" act of rising - Jesus thought otherwise, even of mortal resurrection did He not say to Martha that she should see the Glory of God in the resurrection of her brother? John 11:39,40.

Page 5. Paragraph 2 - John "merely" sees certain persons etc. It was a glorious revelation to him. We don't read in Scripture that the living will have a resurrection - what sense is this? Changed is more scriptural. There will be wise and foolish virgins; those who are left will no doubt be ashamed, not that they are called away to Judgment, but left behind. The obstacle: the rest of the dead. It is easily understood, if not jumbled up with tradition. The passage proves clearly to the uninitiated in this jumble that certain ones rise and the rest are left dead (rise not). This harmonizes, not violates, the whole testimony, and gives us the common interpretation, and the judgement as proven still remains,

Paragraph 3. This plainest of all inspired words concerning the method of resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15:42,44,52 is made void by tradition. Did the Apostle know what he was writing about? Did he not write in answer to the question, verse 35, "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" And is not this chapter a complete answer; could he have spoken any plainer? No, nothing lies between; to suggest that anything does is to practically tell Paul he has forgotten

something of great importance. Let such that say so have the opportunity of telling Paul that he led us astray in this chapter on resurrection.

Page 6. Paragraphs 4-5 is side-tracking. Drawing a red herring across the trail.

Page 7. Paragraph 1. Why cast a blur over this plain enlightening and glorious news - this gospel of our salvation which agrees perfectly with all the Apostle's statements? True wisdom lies in accepting that which is written, neither taking from nor adding to. The responsibility for so doing is realized by the writer of these notes. This judgment continually is so prevalent that it comes into the thanksgiving for the Bread and Wine. In fact the Judgment Seat. We have heard such - until the thanks is clean forgotten by brethren. That Christ rose "mortal" is a word destroying doctrine. True, Christ was a living soul born of a virgin then begotten by the Spirit of Holiness in resurrection. 2nd Psalm and Peter's interpretation thereof. Acts 13:33; Hebrews 5:5 (quote this - Romans 1:4) he is now the Lord, the Spirit.

Paragraph 2. The Editor is forced against his will, seemingly to confess that "coincidentally" and "elliptically" this immortal resurrection is true.

Paragraph 3 - Very difficult to find a place for 1 Corinthians 15 - a place unseen by the unacquainted reader. Those unacquainted with tradition believe the truth on this matter. Christendom is less astray on this than some acquainted ones suppose. There must be something seriously wrong when such words, viz:- "We have endeavoured to find a place for 1 Corinthians 15." What a confession of utter failure to bolster up a tradition. Is it not putting Paul out of harmony with himself, to make void his most emphatic declaration or answer to the question, "with what body do they come?"

Again, "The future is a sealed book," says C.C.Walker. We would refer him to that well-known and often read passage in 1 Corinthians 11:31,32. Is this not plain enough that we are judged now daily. Whilst we remember the warning, "Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall," it is not presumption to hold fast to that which is written of those who believe and are baptized and walk after the Spirit; that we are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. "He that believeth in the Son hath the witness in himself." 1 John 5:10.

Page 8. Paragraph 1. This declaration of Paul to the men of Athens who were idolaters, and whom the Apostle would turn them from such idolatry, but surely brethren of Christ do not need this "sobering fact." This again would be fear. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment." 1 John 4:18. "Fear not little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

C.C.Walker comments on Wm. Richmond's pamphlet:- "If Wm. Richmond had said otherwise he would have been accused of setting himself up to be the Judge." This comment of C.C.Walker's reminds one of what Jesus said about the Pharisees concerning John the Baptist and Himself; they were like children sitting in the market place, etc. Neither John nor Christ pleased them.

Paragraph 2. As far as C.C.Walker goes and views 1 Corinthians 15 it is a trouble to him, and the New Testament would be well rid of this chapter.

Paragraph 3. The Doctor, C.C.Walker, nor Wm. Richmond need be followed unless they prove all things.

Paragraph 4. The word used "raised" is quite appropriate for Lazarus and Jesus and the Saints.

Page 9. Paragraph 2. Why add ascent to the Divine Nature. No proof of this; it is all theory and tradition. An error has occurred here, is it chapter 28, not 29, and this record destroys what is left of

the flimsy argument upon which so much is based - that law of uncleanness had been nailed to His Cross.

Knowing Christ no more after the flesh. Why? For the obvious reason that He rose a Spiritual body.

Page 10. Paragraph 1. The word "Resurrection" is applicable to both classes with a thousand years between.

Paragraph 2. David's hope is in perfect harmony with the much abused 1 Corinthians 15. Simultaneous resurrection is not proven by Matthew 25:41. There are three parties here. Resurrection of the Just is always put first. And because the two are mentioned in the same verse is no proof that there is not an interval. For we remember the interval in "the day of vengeance" of 2,000 years which Christ did not read in the Synagogue at Nazareth.

We rejoice with David in his exultation and hope to awake with His likeness, which is the portion of the children of God who have been redeemed, not with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ. To accuse those who believe this, of wresting the Scriptures, is untrue and we are content to await the verdict of the Judge.

No one that believes what is written can deny the resurrection of the unjust, but the question at issue is "when do they appear?" But the rest of the dead live not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Revelation 20:6, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." And this is the resurrection that Paul strove to attain unto.

Re "exanastasis" - ex, out of, as in Exodus - a standing forth again most emphatic and quite in accordance with Paul's desire, and with those in Hebrews 11:35. "That they might obtain a better resurrection." The better is most certainly an immortal resurrection, for nowhere in Scripture is a mortal resurrection for the Saints recorded. And so according to C.C.Walker, we have David at variance with Daniel. Surely this is not the work of one who declares the Scriptures infallible. And every word of God is true. But we are dealing with the Children of God.

According to the idea put forth by C.C.Walker here in Matthew 25:31, we have Christ enthroned in Jerusalem before the Judgment takes place. This is not in accord with Christadelphian tradition but a reversion of it. The reference to Daniel 12:1,2, with the fuller revelation of Christ in Revelation 20:5,6, given to the servants to understand, the interval of 1,000 years is clear.

The pre-millennial lake of fire, yes, the nations are preparing for that. The last war was termed "Hell with the lid off." It is a pity to make void (or attempt to) the words of Paul in Philippians 3:11. "If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

Yes, "the vile" will be left behind in the grave and the vile bodies of the living will be changed in the twinkling of an eye. 1 Corinthians 15:52.

Page 11. Paragraph 1. Never mind what "Christendom Astray" said. We believe that "Christendom Astray" is astray on some things and this is one of them.

We accept Paul as previously stated in 2 Corinthians 5:10 and also 1 Corinthians 3:13-15. Verse 16 is a matter we may write further on, God willing. "The Spirit of God dwelling in you." We fail to see that Mr. Richmond has in any way wrested Isaiah 26:19, but brings it in beautiful harmony with the hope and striving to attain which Paul expresses in Philippians 3.

Paragraph 2. There is no need to quibble over the fact that righteous judgment will be meted out by the Judge of all the earth. But the children of God are judged now and chastened now - 1 Corinthians 11:32; "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord that we should not be

condemned with the world.” The world will be brought into subjection, no-one attempts to deny. But the Kingdom must be set up before Abraham can be seen in it.

Paragraph 3. We think this has been covered. “When he shall come,” yes, but it doesn’t follow it is one of the first acts of Christ, because His judgement or rule extends in time and extent.

Page 12. Paragraph 1. It may be quite easy to assert that Mr Richmond wrests the Scriptures, but let the reader be perfectly convinced whether this assertion is true or not. As far as we know Mr Richmond had no organization behind him and if he did, comparable to Birmingham, it was quite insignificant. But has it not been said that truth is found with the minority?

Paragraph 2. There is no need to “imagine” Christ blessing a nation because of its blessings to the Jews. For is not this a general belief by God’s promises to Abraham? “Blessed is he that blesseth thee.” Genesis 12:3.

In conclusion we would exhort the reader to search the Scriptures on this important subject. “What is written - How readest thou?” “Understandest thou what thou readest?” Not in “Anastasia” but in the Bible; belief in the written word of God is enjoined upon all those who are brethren of Christ. Christadelphians believe they are the Spiritual Israel (although they had no spiritual birth). We read in Hebrews 4:1-9, that Israel entered not into their rest because of unbelief. We charge the Birmingham fellowship with unbelief of 1 Corinthians 15.

There are many who, as previously stated, some voluntarily, others forced to leave this body or organization which as one prominent member of it declared publicly at a Fraternal Gathering, “Is a recognized body of religious people and has its place in the sun.” There are dangers in this position. And the powers of such are very often abused. As previously stated as R.Roberts wrote; “If you are in isolation thank God for it, otherwise you will be subject to others and find your freedom restricted” (or words to that effect).

Christ Himself suffered at the hands of those whose traditions had made the word of God of none effect. And even in His own little company they forbade one who was casting out devils in His name, because as they said, he followeth not us. Forbid him not, says Christ.

Now we would earnestly commend the reader to 2 Corinthians 5:1-10. The tenth verse is made so much of, while the first verse is almost unnoticed and in this Paul, says “For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved we have a building from God, a house, not made with hands eternal in the heavens.”

In 1 John 7 we read, “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” And this is a daily judgment, see verse 9.

And in chapter 3 verse 2 we read, “Beloved now are we the sons of God and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is.”

Going back for a moment in conclusion to “Raised Incorruptible” page 7, paragraph 3, the writer says, “Prior to this (i.e., tribunal), the future is a sealed book excepting in so far as it is reflected in a man’s conscience.”

“For we know,” says Paul and John, Hebrews 12:22, “Not to Sinai but Zion ye are come.”

G. Reeves.