

Fifteen Bombs

That Sank My Theological Ship

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*M*y first shock came when conducting evangelistic services in a community hall, I visited the home of a man, some of whose children had been saved at the meetings. I asked him if he would accept Christ as His personal Savior. He looked at the ground, and I hoped he would decide favorably, but when he looked up and spoke he set me thinking. His voice was slow and intense. "If the way you preach is right, then one of my boys is in hell now, and if that is where he is, I want to be with him ..." That man wasn't fooling, he meant it!

My second shock came when a friend in Pennsylvania gave me a book called, *"After the Thousand Years,"* by George F. Trench. Although I could not accept all the views of the author, I became convinced of two things, namely, that there is no word for "eternity" in the Greek or Hebrew Scriptures, and that the plainest teaching of the Word of God has been obscured by incorrect and inconsistent translation of the Greek word "aion." It cannot possibly mean "eternity", for consistency would force us into such senseless renderings as *"the present eternity"*, and *"before eternity"* (see I Timothy 6:17; II Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2). Furthermore, a consistent rendering of the word in Hebrews 9: 26 would give us the contradictory phrase: *"at the conclusion of the eternity."*

My third shock, the one that really jarred me loose from the binding tradition and the fear of men, came when a railroad engineer and a police sergeant, who had been impressed with my faithfulness in preaching the Word of God as I understood it, came to see me. We talked for nearly four hours. When they left I found I had used up all the heavy ammunition I had gathered in college, seminary and twenty years of conformity to the "Fundamentalist" and "Evangelical" hierarchy. I couldn't seem to be able to find their range, and when I did find it, my big gun jammed.

Fifteen bombs exploded on my deck, wrecking my fine theological system.

#1. If God will have all men to be saved, and if most men are lost, then how can God be supreme (I Timothy 2:3, 4)?

#2. If Christ is the Propitiation for the sins of the whole world, did He die in vain for the lost (I John 2:2)?

#3. If God is going to reconcile the universe through Christ, how can some be tormented forever (Colossians 1:20)?

#4. How can God, in Christ, gather all things together as one while billions remain eternally estranged (Ephesians 1:10)?

#5. If all die in Adam, and a few are made alive in Christ, how can grace much more abound than sin (Romans 5:20)?

#6. If all men are condemned by one man's offense, why are not all men justified by one man's obedience (Roman 5:18)?

#7. If all die in Adam, why shall not all be made alive in Christ (I Corinthians 15:22)?

#8. How can every knee bow confessing Christ Lord, to God's glory, unless reconciled (Philippians 2:10, 11)?

#9. If Christ only hath immortality, how can any of the dead be alive now (I Timothy 6:14-16; I Corinthians 15:53, 54)?

#10. If the wicked go to hell as soon as they die, why are they raised and judged later (Revelation 20:11-15)?

#11. Since the lake of fire is the second death, what happens to the wicked when death is destroyed (I Corinthians 15:26)?

#12. If "*forever*" means "*eternity*" what does "*forever and ever*" mean?

#13. If God is love and has all power, will He not find away to save all, or will His love ultimately fail (I Timothy 4:9-11)?

#14. If Christ is to reign "*for ever and ever*," what does it mean that He will deliver up the kingdom to the Father (Revelation 11:15; I Corinthians 15:24)?

#15. Will God ever actually become "*All in all*" (I Corinthians 15:28)?

It is amazing that so many doctrines not taught in Scripture have been branded as orthodox. As long as men accepted popery and priestcraft as orthodox, they were ignorant; but a fresh study of the Greek Scriptures at the time of the Reformation convinced believers that God was

justifying sinners by faith, and consequently they broke with tradition and sought for a firm basis of truth in God's Word.

You too will find new wonders in the Sacred Scriptures when you are ready to throw off the yoke of tradition and the fear of what people will say, and with a prayerful and teachable spirit, you study His Word and believe God!

Grace and Truth

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