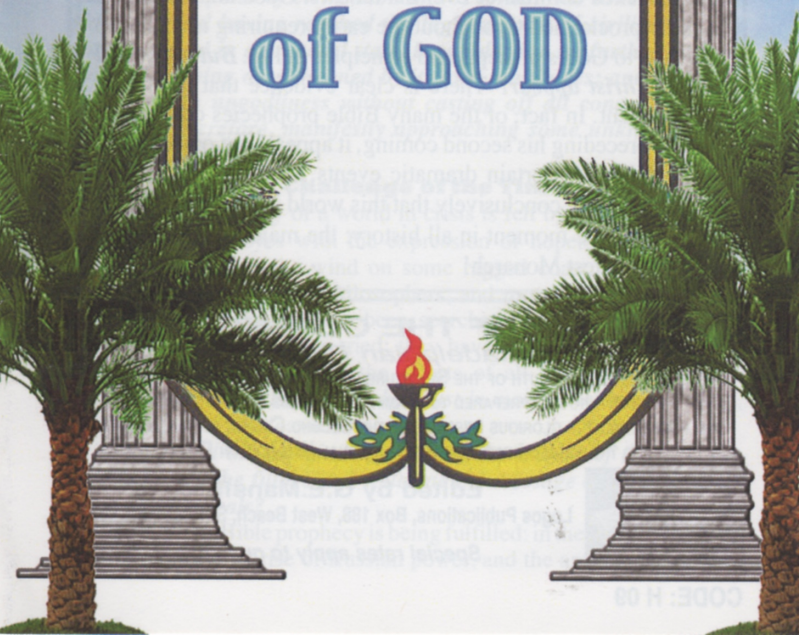


CHURCH DILEMMA

**WOMAN'S ORDINATION
OR APOSTOLIC INSTRUCTION?**

**A Woman's Role
In the Purpose
of GOD**



THE Bible clearly teaches that the divine purpose revolves around the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth. The drama that unfolded 2,000 years ago in the city of Jerusalem will soon be replayed upon earth. But this time the personality will not be a "carpenter's son," a "meek and mild" teacher of Nazareth, a man prepared to suffer the ignominy of a cruel and vengeful mob. When the Saviour of mankind appears for the "second" time (cp. Hebrews 9:28), he will complete the purpose of his heavenly Father to rid this world of its evil, bloodshed and violence, and establish the glorious Kingdom of God on earth. Jesus Christ will appear as the "Lord of lords, and King of kings" (Revelation 17:14), as the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" (ch. 5:5), with divine authority to "execute judgment and justice in the earth" (Jeremiah 23:5). *This is the second stage of God's plan of salvation, and will vitally affect the way of life of every living being.* No longer will man be allowed to exert wicked dominance over his fellows. Good and wise laws will be proclaimed throughout the earth, requiring mankind to respond to God's precepts and principles in life. *But when will Jesus Christ appear?* There is clear evidence that his return is imminent. In fact, of the many Bible prophecies concerning events preceding his second coming, it appears not one remains to be fulfilled. Certain dramatic events, which have recently occurred, show conclusively that this world is on the eve of the most dramatic moment in all history: the majestic presence of earth's greatest Monarch!

HERALD OF THE COMING AGE

A Christadelphian Publication

DECLARING THE TRUTH OF THE SCRIPTURES REVEALED FOR THE SALVATION
OF THOSE WHO ARE PREPARED TO EXAMINE THE CLAIMS OF GOD'S WORD;
AND PRESENTING THE GLORIOUS MESSAGE OF THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST
AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GOD'S ETERNAL KINGDOM ON EARTH.



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WOMEN'S ORDINATION OR APOSTOLIC INSTRUCTION

A Woman's Role in the Purpose of God

THE world is advancing to some unknown point; some great collision is at hand, or some complete and final revolution. The highest point of civilisation moves toward the lowest point of godliness; and having reached the highest point of civilisation, the world is found in a dreadful state. It can decline no further without civilisation being overwhelmed by its own multitudes; and it can go no further in ungodliness without casting off all connection with God. It is, therefore, manifestly approaching some unknown point — some fearful crisis.

The Challenge of the Times

The terrible reality of a world in crisis is felt by all; and folk look into each other's eyes with the expression of hopelessness, as of a crew driving before the wind on some ragged coast. What will the future reveal? Statesmen, philosophers, and moralists are all equally perplexed. The heavens have been searched in vain. Statesmen and conquerors have each been tried; they have succeeded for a day and promised for a century; but the efforts of all have been defeated. "Cursed is the man that putteth his trust in man", declares the Bible, and that curse is indefeasible.

When shall all mankind learn from the history of the past the desperation of the future and welcome the message of hope that the Bible alone reveals?

Meanwhile, Bible prophecy is being fulfilled: in the divided, warlike state of nations, the rise of Russian power, and the amazing revival of

Israel in the Middle East. The Bible Lands are again springing into life, and the world watches with bated breath as the turmoil continues: a token that Christ's coming is at hand. He comes to put down all oppression and reign on earth to the benefit of humanity: *"The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed... it shall last forever"* (Daniel 2:44). So the Lord taught the Apostles to pray: *"Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as in heaven."*

Please give earnest heed to the contents of this booklet: it has a sure message of hope for you.

The apostle Paul prophesied of the church's decline and dilemma: *"The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own desires shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the Truth, and shall be turned unto fables"* (2Timothy 4:3-4).

Women's Dilemma: Christ's Coming Kingdom

The dilemma of Women's Liberation is a Man! He stands at the head of creation: a man, compassionate, courageous, a counsellor, without a human peer.

He is the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Subject to this man, is his Bride, his true Church (Greek: *Ecclesia* — the congregation of true believers), formed of men and women, who thankfully, submissively, and wisely, recognise his leadership in the issues of life. With compassion, this man offered his life for the salvation of his congregation; with courage, he stood against all opposition, and though crucified, he rose from the dead. His counsel has stood the test of time, vindicating the biblical prophecy, yet to be fulfilled: *"In his name shall the nations trust"* (Matthew 12:21).

Moreover, this man is destined, shortly, to return to this earth, personally, and visibly. Then, national, domestic, and personal direction will be subject to his supreme government, for the blessedness of mankind, and for the glory of his Father, the Creator of heaven and earth. Christ's earthly reign will bring radical changes in all avenues of human affairs: then all nations will trust in his name, calling him *"blessed"* (Psalm 72:17); he will bring *"times of refreshing"* to this earth. Consider these extremely beautiful, prophetic promises: *"Times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the LORD; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began"* (Acts 3:19-21).

These words are clear, easily understood. They promise *"times of*

refreshing", a renewing for this sad, sorrowing, sinning earth: they are an echo of many similar Bible prophecies which require the personal return of Christ to this earth.

Policy of Women's Liberation

Women's dilemma, which various *Women's Liberation Movements* seeks to solve, is that all, both men and women, ultimately will be compelled to submit to the authority and guidance of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel message is a call to do so now in hope of life eternal at his coming.

Though Christ may be ignored today, the time is rapidly approaching when that will be impossible. He is an absolute fact of history. Even now, submission to him will bring satisfaction of living and peace of mind beyond the turmoil of life without hope. He has given unqualified, unique, assurance of that, declaring: "*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light*" (Matthew 11:28-30).

This wonderful promise is in stark contrast to our restless, antagonistic, faction-ridden, godless society. Belief in that promise presents a challenge to every man and woman. Do you believe it? Can you rest upon it? Is Christ your example for living? Is he your Saviour for life eternal on earth in the future? Have you taken his yoke upon you, identifying with his example of service? Belief in that wonderful, beautiful promise secures "*promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*" — even eternal life on this earth at Christ's return (1Timothy 4:8-10; John 6:39-40, 44, 45).

A Crisis Impending

Today's society is fragmenting. The foundations of family and national life are being undermined. The stability of all things is being shaken to such an extent as to fill the hearts of men and women with perplexing fear. Assertive grasps for equality in life is one such disturbing element, in fulfilment of Bible prophecy. Christ predicted these events would precede his personal return to this earth: "*Upon the earth [there will be] distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth... and then shall they see the Son of man [a title for the Lord Jesus Christ] coming in a cloud with power and great glory*" (Luke 21:25-27).

These words describe our day. There is distress among the nations. The hearts of men and women tremble at the fragmenting collapse

of society. The prophecy describes our modern days as being full of "perplexity." The word denotes "with no way out." Are not the present-day economic, social and political problems insoluble to mortal man?

We need to give serious thought to these words of Christ. Both men and women need to ask: "Am I prepared for Christ's return?" At that time, women will see their "Lord," and men their "King." How vain then will all present strivings for "equality" and power appear!

Eve: The Original Women's Liberator!

Both sexes are susceptible to an undue exaltation. Today, that assertive exaltation is being displayed, very sadly, on every level of society: women degrade themselves in so doing, and destroy those feminine qualities that fittingly and beautifully adorn them: the "*meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price*" (1 Peter 3:4). The opposite of that lowers her into the category of Proverbs 9:13, 14. In their proper place, women can be superior to men, but in their assertive grasp at so-called "equality" with man in his realm, she displays her inability and weakness. Such strivings are not unique to our days for history witnesses to them, and reveals how they have contributed to the decline of family life, society, and the nation.

In the beginning, after Eve transgressed the divine law, the decree to the woman was voiced: "*Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee*" (Genesis 3:16). But mankind (and not merely women) has chosen to ignore the divine decree, and in doing so rejects the teaching of the Bible, ignoring the fact that God's way is best. God "*needeth not that any should testify of man; for He knoweth what is in him*" (John 2:25). Man was made "*in the image and likeness of God*" (Genesis 1:26). When His laws are obeyed they provide a way of fulfilment and satisfaction for humanity. Rejection of His way has resulted in havoc throughout this earth in the past; and does so today.

Eve proved this to be so. In her ungodly grasp for equality, prompted by the reasoning of the serpent in the Garden of Eden, Eve lost the promise of life eternal and divine glory with her husband, Adam, that was previously available for obedience, and found herself subject to temptation, pain and death. In His words to the serpent who beguiled Eve, God declared: "*I will put enmity between thee*" (the power of sin represented in the serpent) "*and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel*" (Genesis 3:15).

Christ, the promised Redeemer, born of a woman (Galatians 4:4), inheriting our common nature subject to sin and death, conquered it by his obedient, submissive life unto death (Philippians 2:5-10; Hebrews

2:14). That is what is meant by Christ bruising the "head [the thinking part] of the serpent".* Adam and Eve were motivated by the reasoning of the serpent when they sinned, and earned a punishment from which they could not deliver themselves. It required a Redeemer to do so, and Jesus Christ was appointed to this end. By his sacrificial death and resurrection he has opened the way for deliverance from sin and death for all who come unto him in submissive belief and baptism (Mark 16:15-16).

Moreover, in Christ the way is opened to a true 'equality' that presently is not possible; it is found only according to God's purpose (Galatians 3:26-28). That is the consoling promise of hope offered to the first man and woman after their transgression. It humbled them, and called forth their faith and belief in it, and their strivings to obey God in anticipation of attaining unto the equality and salvation through the Redeemer promised in Genesis 3:15. Adam and Eve were taught to anticipate deliverance from all their foolishness through their Seed, "the man, Christ Jesus."

Unfortunately mankind never learns. Eve's ungodly grasp at equality, and Adam's equally foolish compliance to such, has, sadly, been repeated by their offspring throughout the history of mankind's existence. In Adam's compliance to the silvery appeal of Eve, and in all following historical examples of such, man bears the equal, if not the larger share, of blame. Women assert their equality when man abdicates his position as leader in the home, society, and nation.

Attempts At Liberation

The ungodly degradation and suppression to which men have subjected women in the past has fuelled the fires of emancipation by women, on frequent, notable occasions. Although that desire is commendable, the methods used are not. Moreover, the woman is not helped by such, but is further abused by man.

Women's perfect equality is found only in Christ, where there is "neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). Further, womankind becomes equal "heirs" with the man to the promised eternal inheritance of this globe (verse 29). They attain such perfection of equality in the resurrection from the grave at Christ's return, when they shall become "equal to the angels" (Luke 20:36).

But, in the past women have attempted to attain this equality by their own means. The brigade of the 'blue stockings' at Babylon's

* In Scripture, the serpent is used as a synonym for sinful human nature (see Psalms 58:4; 140:3; Matthew 23:33, and compare Numbers 21:6 with John 3:14-16).

university, 4,000 years ago; the Lacedaemonian (Spartan) women who were too powerful to be suppressed by Lycurgus of Sparta; the 'matrons' of ancient Rome and China — all asserted their rights. Attempting a mitigation of their subjection, silently manipulating for their emancipation, they embroiled themselves, and their societies, in fruitless destruction. Their partial and temporary successes were contributing factors in the fragmentation, and destruction of their several societies. Such is so today. Who can deny it, when shattered marriages, divided homes and separated children, are the bitter fruits harvested from a godless age?

The proud, assertive women of Isaiah's day, 2,700 years ago, brought a similar devastation to Israel's society (see Isaiah 3:16-26). Such is the inevitable result when man refrains from providing sound leadership and wise counsel (Isaiah 3:12). A Semiramis of ancient Babylon, a Boadicea of ancient Britain, a Herodias, a Lady Macbeth of Scotland, a flock of female deGuises and Medicis, all assert their unhealthy influences because of the failure of men. A man should never permit the words of woman to intervene between him and the wise provision or true worship of God. Myriads of men have made shipwreck of their faith, lives, and, in some cases, their nations by listening to the silvery seductive counsel of a woman who refuses the wisdom of God. Man's status is divinely set to "*the image and glory of God*" (1Corinthians 11:7). He forfeits such a position when he ignores, or forgets God's laws (Ecclesiastes 7:29). Moreover, like Adam (Genesis 3:17), he involves himself in a curse when he abdicates the throne of loving leadership. Let man assume the leadership that God has designed him to manifest, and the woman shall then rule in his heart by those feminine qualities that his compassionate, courageous counsel will inspire and cherish (see Proverbs 31:10-11; 28-31; Ephesians 5:24-25).

The Bible abounds with records of a Delilah who weakened the strength of an unwatchful Samson; a Jezebel who devastated a kingdom through the supine abdication of the King Ahab of Israel, and a vindictive Herodias who trapped Herod into a murder he later regretted. Solomon, one of the wisest men who has ever lived, was ensnared by the influence of "foreign women" who led him from the Law of his God (1Kings 11:1-9).

For man to provide wise, proper, compassionate leadership, he must get down to reading his Bible, and permit that to be the ruling, guiding influence in his life.

It was the Bible that proved its worth in guiding the greatest man

— Christ. This same Book can motivate us along a course of action to life eternal. It is our wisdom to use it to that end.

Apostolic Instruction

“Man,” says the Apostle Paul, *“is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man.”* The reason he assigns for this is, because *“the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man”* (1Corinthians 11:7-9).

As such, man has been invited to the throne of responsible leadership. Upon his shoulders, rests the compassionate government of sound counsel and peace. He forfeits that high office to the shame of himself, and the confusion of those dependent upon his appointed position.

However, man cannot perform this function unaided. God fully understood this when He created Adam. His motivation must come from the divine revelation, the Bible. From that Book, he can obtain the infallible guidance he so desperately needs: it is “a light unto his path.” As such, it claims inspiration: *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works”* (2Timothy 3:16-17).

God's Purpose in Creation

The woman was formed by God as a dependent creature, with a compassionate bond in marriage that would unite them inseparably (Genesis 2:18, 23, 24; Ephesians 5:21-29). That bond was to be intellectually and morally sympathetic. Eve was to revere Adam as her lord, and Adam to lovingly cherish Eve as a beloved ‘helper’ provided by God. It was not, nor should it be, a mere physical union, but a companionship of common rejoicing in the laws and ways of God.

Unfortunately, mankind has not acted in that way, bringing in its train the bursting sorrow and heartache leading to the brink of despair.

The woman was designed to be first and foremost a wife and companion; motherhood was a later development and though so important, was secondary to being a *“help meet”* for her husband — a fact that many choose to unwisely ignore.

Hence the absolute importance for men and women to make the Bible the foundation of their companionship and union (1Peter 3:7). Its teaching can provide a bond to every marriage, capable of withstanding the challenging pressures of life.

It is the rejection of these areas of communication that has brought

men and women into fruitless and frustrating quarrels, overwhelming the heart, destroying love, and fragmenting families, societies, and nations. Worse, children are often abandoned to the scrap-heap of emotional ruin. The greatest governmental expense today is in Social Security services; and this has escalated due to the breakdown of marriage, contributed by the Equal Opportunity Laws. Even godly women who had embraced the true gospel, and being married to a man who is an unbeliever, are enjoined by apostolic guidance to show all submissiveness and co-operation in "*a meek and quiet spirit*" (1Peter 3:1, 4), an attitude and conduct well fitted to conquer the man far more completely than all the demands made.

On the other hand the masculine assertiveness for equality by women, within or without the church, is but a modern enactment of Eve's assertive grasp for the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. The disappointment and disaster attendant upon her action, has been, and will continue to be the experience of her modern sisters (see Isaiah 3:16-26).

True Women of Faith

The apostolic injunction upon women within the congregation of Christ, is that she must not "*usurp authority over the man but to be in silence*" (1Corinthians 14:34-35; 1Timothy 2:11-12). Outside of that congregation, her conduct, in rejecting, or despising the divine direction, will be to her own folly. She will fall in the eyes of God and man, from that which truly adorns a woman, and which invites a man's loving care. Her feminine loveliness will be traded for incongruous dominance. In the contemporary record of women's foolish grasp at equality with men, they, with the supportive voice of some equally foolish males, have made the fatal mistake that equality means "the same." That is completely rejected by the Bible, and is obviously wrong from experience.

The woman is the "*weaker vessel*" (1Peter 3:7); subjected to the wise, loving guidance of her husband (Ephesians 5:22-25); formed as a godly companion for the man (1Corinthians 11:9); encouraged to reveal a chaste, meek and quiet spirit (1Peter 3:4), and sternly warned against the evils peculiar to her sex (1Timothy 5:13-15). Their godly, helpful work within the congregation of Christ is well expressed by the Apostle (Titus 2:4-5), and their sphere of work was to concentrate on encouraging younger women, guiding them unto godly standards. The value of such activities far outweighs the supposed "benefits" of equality.

If a fraction of the time, effort and money, exhausted in grasping

at equality by ambitious women, were spent in the Apostolic direction, society would rejoice in their presence, rather than, as today, regret those who dominate.

Representing the Bride of Christ

These wise apostolic teachings reveal a wonderful parable in the proper role of women: Christ is the "head" of the congregation of believers (Colossians 1:18), as man is the head of his household. The congregation of believers — both male and female — is Christ's future "Bride" (John 3:29), as the woman is her husband's (Ephesians 5:22-33). True meaningful marriage epitomises the great purpose that will be fulfilled at Christ's return to this earth. Then Christ will claim his Bride (Revelation 19:7-8) and unite himself with the glorified believers in immortality (2Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:7-8).

Men and women are invited to prepare themselves for the honour of being Christ's future "wife" (Revelation 19:7-8), to assist him in the ruling and guiding of the nations in God's ways. Then, in the personal, physical, visible, example of Christ and his Bride, mankind will see an example of real co-operation on which they can pattern their personal and family lives. Assertive women and supine men will be a thing of the dismal past. Men will assume the honoured position of leader, and women shall rule in the hearts of such by the inestimable, feminine qualities of a chaste, meek, and quiet spirit. In that wonderful, glorious day "*the branch of the LORD*" (a title of Christ and his Bride), will spread its beauty, loveliness, and its counsel, over society (see Isaiah 4:1-4).

There is no greater treasure than to be united eternally to Christ, the greatest man who has ever lived. Nothing that this world offers can compare to eternal life on this earth, with access to divine power, wisdom, and love.

Decline and Confusion in Christendom

The Church's dilemma is seen in Christ's prayer for his Ecclesia, the congregation of 'called out ones' from society at large. Christ prayed for unity, a oneness of mind in his congregation (John 17:20-21).

Christendom falsely claims his discipleship, but is split into factions, conflicting opinions on how to deal with their dilemma, since women's liberation policies are wanting, and obtaining, changes in the Church. Cant, confusion, and crusade, challenge many sincere men and women. The exact opposite to Christ's prayer prevails on all hands. Instead of oneness, there is a multitude of conflicts. Why is this so?

Bible prophecy declares that such a state would be a sign heralding

Christ's return to this earth. The Bible predicts the advent of "*perilous times*" (2Timothy 3:1), of breakdown of all human society (verses 2-4) and the development of a religion "*having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof*" (verse 5). This is clearly seen in the diverse, discordant doctrines, sects, and practices, abounding within Christendom today.

Notice however, that the Apostle states that this failure would involve those he describes as "*silly women laden with sins*" (verses 6-7). How accurate that prediction! It is being fulfilled today in the lack of proper, sound guidance to women within the church. Do not many clerics support the "*silly women*" who seek leadership within the church? Is not this a denial of the power of Apostolic teaching and of all that is wise and true? Furthermore, the Apostle stated that these events will occur in "*the last days*" (verse 1), a term referring to the days just preceding Christ's return — our days! Thus, the evidence of women's ordination claims at the present time emphasizes that Christ is about to intervene in world affairs, as he promised.

The Duty of the Priest

Should not the priest's lips "*keep knowledge*" as recorded in Malachi 2:7? In answer, the prophet of God says of the priests: "*But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law*" (verse 8). This sad state of the priesthood of ancient Israel is also seen today in the counsels of the Church. The clergy are divided in their opinion about women's rights, unsure about the issues that face them, and unwilling to stand clearly and firmly for what the Bible declares on such matters. The contention surrounding women's ordination to the priesthood is a case in point.

In clear opposition to general Bible teaching and the specific instructions of the apostle Paul, some areas of the church are rushing into bringing women into the priesthood. The folly of this path is seen in present church confusion; while the end of this path will witness the abandonment of Bible teaching by the church in favour of short-term political and social advantages. Church leaders stand condemned for their ignorance and folly in this issue.

Christ instructed his Apostles concerning defective priests: "*Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch*" (Matthew 15:14). If there is a danger of "*falling into the ditch,*" becoming trapped and snared by clerical folly and ultimately eternal darkness, we urge the reader to leave the confusion of Christendom, turn to the Bible, and let that be the sole guide. It takes courage, and it may mean separation

from family and friends. Christ promised no less (Mark 10:29), but offers an "hundredfold" replacement of all we might lose (verse 30). That wisdom is found in the Bible, which, if followed, will provide the means of release from "the ditch" (grave) and the grand hope of eternal companionship with Christ upon this earth at his coming.

Signs of Christ's Coming

Christ's return to this earth is repeatedly stated in the New Testament, and proclaimed by all God's prophets in the Old. That return will be visible, personal, and physical. The same Jesus Christ who ascended to heaven in sight of his apostles about 2,000 years ago is the one who will come again! Angels told his disciples: "*This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven*" (Acts 1:11). Christ was actually seen and handled by his apostles after his resurrection. They saw him, spoke with him, touched him, and ate with him. Though given divine immortal nature he was the same Jesus with whom they had spent three years during his ministry. They were not mistaken. Over 500 people saw the risen Christ and spoke with him during those busy days before his ascension (1Corinthians 15:6).

The angels stated in Acts 1:11, that Christ will so return "*in like manner.*" The phrase defines his coming as personally, physically, and visibly. "*Every eye shall see him*" (Revelation 1:7); he comes to reward all who look for him in faith (Revelation 22:12); he will radically change human society for the better (Acts 17:31), bringing all nations under his supreme control (Revelation 11:15). He comes as King, with divine power, wisdom, and love (John 18:36-37). His resurrected, glorified followers will obey his command, supplanting the evil of today's world with the goodness of divine government (cp. Psalm 72; Isaiah 32). It will be "*times of refreshing*" (Acts 3:19-21), an age when true wisdom will direct policies for the benefit of society, and bring a fresh breeze into humanity's path.

Although no-one knows the exact day of Christ's return (see Acts 1:7), yet God has given clear prophetic signs, heralding that return. Christ's command is to "*watch*" for those signs (Mark 13:35-37).

He said: "*Upon the earth [there will be] distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth... and then shall they see the Son of man [a title for Christ] coming in a cloud with power and great glory*" (Luke 21:25-27). These words exactly describe our present-day perplexed and distressed world. Security of work is in doubt; confidence in a bank balance is sapped

by inflation and taxation; safety of person and property is threatened by insane gunmen; world peace is challenged by global annihilation. There is no man, nor group of men, with the power, wisdom, or love to deliver mankind from the crushing, perplexing evils fragmenting human society.

These words of Christ provide us with a merciful warning. Warning and time is allowed us to give the highest priority to our personal salvation. Moreover, to convince us that Christ's words refer to our days, he predicted that these very world conditions would follow upon the return of the Jews to their own land and city, Jerusalem (Luke 21:24). Prior to 1948 the Jews were a scattered people, dispersed into all nations. But, in fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy (cp. Joel 3:1-2), God has regathered His ancient people back to their land and city. We have seen this happen in our days. Israel is there, in their own land as a united nation. They are there, though far superior forces have, and do, endeavour to destroy them. Israel is a stubborn fact, a divine work, in preparation for the Lord Jesus' return to that nation as their King.

But why should Christ return to the Jews as their king, since they have rejected him? Did not the Roman Governor Pilate weakly submit to Jewish demands for the death of Jesus? Did not King Herod give Jesus over to brutal treatment from his soldiers? They are sad facts of history. Both Jews and Gentiles joined together in Christ's death (Acts 4:27). Except for a small band of faithful followers, most people rejected, abused, mistreated God's Son at that time. Is not that repeated today? Is not Christ's name abused in common speech? Are not his teachings despised and rejected? Do not people "*crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame*" by their misuse and abuse of him and his teachings; by their rejection of the true Bible message? (see Hebrews 6:6). Of course they do!

But a change is impending: The Jewish people have been restored to their ancient land and city in accordance with Bible prophecy, to prepare them to receive Christ, their Messiah King, in submissive obedience. Romans 11:26 declares that Christ will return to Israel to turn away their "*ungodliness.*" Verses 28-29 state that this is in fulfilment of the ancient promises God has made unto the fathers of that nation, and then concludes with these extremely significant words "*that He [God] might have mercy upon all*" (verse 32).

God has promised to give Israel His Son as their King (cp. 2Samuel 7:12-16), and as the Saviour for all nations (Luke 2:11-14). That promise God will perform in sending His Son back to this earth. God does not change. He makes a promise, and He keeps it, though

we, His creatures, might be unworthy of His blessing. But we can please Him!

Belief in these promises and obedience to His commands, lead to the gracious gift of "divine nature" (2Peter 1:4). Immortality will be granted to all Christ's faithful followers at his return. How important to read our Bibles to learn of these promises! *The Christadelphians desire to help you in this regard. That is the purpose of this booklet. Why not check the Bible references used in this booklet and begin to make your hope a Bible hope.*

Christ has given us further signs. He declared that the world conditions at his coming will be like those in Noah's day and Lot's day (Luke 17:26-37). Noah's day saw humanity in godless rebellion and violence (Genesis 6:5, 11) and Lot's day witnessed blatant Sodomy (Genesis 18:20). These are the predominant characteristics of present-day society! A godless violence fills the earth, as to threaten mankind's very existence. Rebellion is felt in all stratas of society as strikes, disturbances, and unrest bring increasing pressure on a fragile world. To all this is now added the appalling ugliness and disease of sodomy, spreading its vile tentacles among rich and poor. The prophetic words of Jesus are coming to pass with a vengeance!

These days are described by Paul as "the last days" (2Timothy 3:1). They are "last" because they refer to the end of man's shocking misrule and misconduct upon this earth. Thus, God has given clear prophetic 'signs,' all heralding Christ' return to this earth. Christ's command is to "watch" for them, and when seen, to "look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).

But that hope of redemption at Christ's return is only possible by belief of the true gospel and baptism into Christ's name for salvation (Mark 16:16). Believers are warned of departure from "sound doctrine" before his return: "of ears turned away from the truth unto fables" (2Timothy 4:1-4).

Woman's Future Emancipation

Woman's proper emancipation will be introduced by the Son of Mary, and the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. During his ministry Jesus appreciated and acknowledged the loving support given him by faithful women — and by his actions he gave them a higher status and an important place in his work for God.

A group of women supported Jesus with material assistance during his ministry (Luke 8:2-3). Believing women were present at Christ's death upon the stake (John 19:25); witnessed his resurrection (Mark 16:1-8), and joined in prayer with the Lord's apostles after his

ascension to heaven (Acts 1:14).

Women saw and believed in Christ as the promised Saviour of God. One was delivered from her family difficulties (John 4:18-29), another from a debilitating affliction (Matthew 9:20-22); another from nervous and mental instability (Luke 8:2); then another from an unfulfilled life (Luke 7:47); others from looseness of life (John 8:11), from intense personal sorrow (John 11:32-45), and yet another from death itself (Luke 8:54-55). All of this beautiful work in the past is the divine assurance of Christ's future work on this earth at his return. Thus, despair, disease, drudgery, and death, introduced through Eve's grasp for equality, will be removed by Christ, the promised Redeemer born of a woman (see 1 Timothy 2:15; Galatians 4:4-5).

The Divine Marriage

The return of Christ will introduce a time of great rejoicing. A beautiful ceremony will be held, revealing the unique joining in a spiritual union, of Jesus Christ and his Bride — his true followers of all ages. This will commence a schedule of restoration to remedy the present ills of society throughout the earth. Christ will pour forth God's power, bringing life to a desolated earth, restoring women and families to their homes, and bringing righteousness, peace, and stability within human society (Isaiah 32:15-18).

In place of the assertive, proud women of Isaiah 3:16-26 and their equally assertive sisters of today, Christ, with his glorified Bride, will set forth the divine standard, moving men and women to recognise the sanctity and nobility of marriage (Isaiah 4:1-2). At that time, all the moral "filth" that pervades society today, shall be purged off this earth (verse 4). That beautiful time is predicted in Psalm 45. In verse 11, the glorified Bride of Christ addresses him as her "Lord." Hebrews 1:8-9 quotes this Psalm (verses 6-7) applying it to Christ and his Bride. The lovely expressions of Psalm 45 will be fulfilled in Christ and his saints as an example to every mortal household in his kingdom. Every family will be encouraged to model their home on the divine standard. Women shall regard their husbands as their 'lords,' as did faithful women in the past (see 1 Peter 3:6).

With the divine standard of Christ and his saints established in the earth, the husband will care for and guide his wife in loving devotion, following Christ's example (Ephesians 5:25). Women will appreciate the beauty of a "*meek and quiet spirit*" (1 Peter 3:1-4). They will learn from the compassionate, courageous leadership of "*the man Christ Jesus*" as reflected by their husbands moving them to "*daily*" praise the God who has afforded these rich, free blessings (Psalm

72:15). Their heroines in that day will not be the myths of magazine and screen, but the holy women of the Bible, then seen in person, as resurrected, glorified saints. The reverent Sarah, spiritually-minded Rebekah, perceptive Rachel and enduring Leah, shall be their guides. Their courage will be fortified in meditating on the lives of Rahab, Deborah, Jael, and Ruth, who secured victories over tremendous odds. Their patience under difficulties shall be inspired by the life of Hannah, Abigail, Bathsheba and Esther. In short, they will be fully emancipated by the ennobling influences of God's Word upon their minds, a joy to their husbands and fathers, and a blessing to their households, families and people.

A Time to Act

In the meantime, sadly, society is rapidly fragmenting into utter chaos. Therefore our appeal to the reader is that urgent consideration be given to a situation that is worsening daily — and steps taken to secure personal happiness and satisfaction. With the Bible open, comes Christ's loving appeal: *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"* (Matthew 11:28). This is no empty statement, no church hymn, no emotional evangelical slogan. It is the sober words of truth from the Son of God, full of real meaning to the Bible student.

"The coming unto Christ" is not a sentimental, open-air-meeting-"feeling," nor is it imbibed at the local church. It is a mental conviction, achieved by a child-like, diligent application to Bible reading.

Notice the repetition of "come." It is a Father's cry to His children. We should respond to that loving cry. All freely given; it only requires our time and effort. The evidence of a godless life's emptiness and shabbiness is overwhelming; it is a "bread" that satisfies not. But, accepting the gracious invitation of God sets us on the way to eternal life.

We can place absolute confidence in God's promises. In Acts 13:34, Paul assures us that this promise of Isaiah 55:3 is found in Christ and refers to a resurrection from the grave to eternal life. To obtain this requires a knowledge of "the Gospel" (2Timothy 1:10), described as God's power *"unto salvation to every one that believeth"* (Romans 1:16). An understanding of that Gospel is essential for salvation (Mark 16:15-16).

The Gospel that Saves

What is the "Gospel"? It is *"the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ"* (Acts 8:12). Belief in this is what "coming unto Christ" entails. It requires reading the Bible; it demands

time and effort. But the reward is worth it all.

Consider these inestimable benefits.

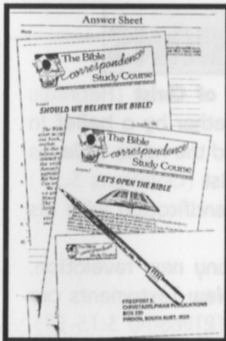
Besides the fact that the Bible gives us a logical, clear picture of past history, a wise guidance for the present, and a sure insight into the future, we have the assurance of eternal life with Christ upon this earth. Moreover, added to that is the honour of assisting him in the education of the nations in divine Truth. We will have the power, wisdom, and love of God at our disposal at that time. With divine power we will remove all oppressors from this earth; with divine wisdom we will guide the nations under the best possible government this earth has ever seen; and with divine love care for every man, woman and child, directing them into the sane, sure, and saving paths of human conduct in all the issues of life. Surely this is a treasure to be sought for, its value far above anything this transient world may offer.

Have you the courage to stand aside from the prevailing evil, and with an independent mind, examine the Bible? God seeks such, and has graciously provided all for us to attain it.

The Christadelphians urge you to give this matter your highest priority, diligent thought, and patient persistence. We will assist you in every respect. We do not appeal for your money, nor for your patronage. We appeal to you to seek your own salvation; to "*save yourselves from this untoward generation*" (Acts 2:40). Then you will have the answer to today's perplexing issues, and the knowledge of true and lasting happiness.

— W.E.

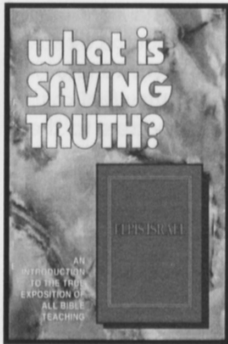
More than at any previous time due to the mass-destructive folly of the nations, hastening inexorably toward Armageddon, there is an urgent need for people today to heed the true gospel message. It proclaims the return of Jesus Christ to the earth to discipline and change this ungodly society; to reward with eternal life on earth his followers; to provide wise rulership over the nations under his unerring guidance. Outside of him, there is no guarantee for mortal life in the coming conflagration. The purpose of this book is to alert you to your personal responsibility in that regard. We, the Christadelphians, will be pleased to put ourselves at your disposal, to set forth to you the basic and saving message of the Bible. There is no financial obligation attached to this offer; merely a desire to do our duty to preach the gospel in love to God and our fellow-men. We therefore suggest that you avail yourself of the free book offered on the inside-back cover of this book.



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