

READING

the Bible



22 My soul, and grace to thy
thy soul, and grace to thy
23 Then shalt thou walk in
24 When thou liest down,
thou shalt not be afraid: yea,

For Pleasure & Profit

THIS booklet introduces the most remarkable book in the world — a book that sells in its millions but is read with understanding by very few. Yet the Bible treats with the practical issues of life. It can change your outlook and lead you in a direction that will secure life eternal at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we suggest that you first read the booklet now in your hands right through, and then carefully re-read it, checking the Bible references quoted. If you have never read the Bible before, this booklet will give you some hints so as to obtain the greatest benefit from it. We believe that you will find it extremely interesting. And when you have finished, would you please hand it to a friend, so that others can similarly benefit. Our desire is that the Bible becomes the power in your life that we have found it to be in ours.

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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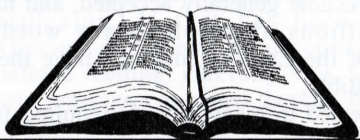
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Reading the Bible

*for
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Profit*



Why Read The Bible?

The Bible is a remarkable book embracing many subjects, styles of expression and teachings. It contains poetry, drama, romance, prophecy, precept, and song — and much more. It has something for everyone, yet so few try to understand its teaching, and fewer still find the key to unlock its real treasures. Above all, it is a storehouse of divine truth which will repay reading whether it be approached merely because of its literary value, its ethical teaching, or its practical bearing on everyday life.

For those prepared to closely study the Bible with the object of learning what God desires of them, it offers present and future blessings beyond the ability of man to assess (Revelation 1:3), for “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him” (1Corinthians 2:9). But God hath revealed them unto us by His spirit (verse 10).

By reading the Bible a love for the book will be developed, and for its Author whose grand purpose is revealed therein. The reader will find a power and influence that can provide the greatest joy in life.

Therefore, this divine book can become a power for the greatest good — if it be read with interest and understanding.

IN 1611, an event took place in Great Britain, destined to greatly influence the character and history of the English-speaking world. The *Authorised Version* of the Bible in English was published for the first time. It was designed for use by all—from the common laborer to the learned scholar, and though, for a time, the public did not quickly respond to its introduction, ultimately it became generally accepted, and has moulded the lives of millions of people. Many words, expressions, and sayings of the English language have their origin in this version of the Bible.

Significantly, it has revealed to many what is required for the acceptable worship of God, and has revealed the way to life eternal.

It can have a profound influence upon us, so governing our lives that it becomes more than *the* Bible, and can be considered as *our* Bible. It can provide personal comfort now, as well as leading to life eternal in the future. Many have endured bitter persecution and death rather than turn from the teaching of the Bible. It has meant more than life itself to them.

Why?

Because, having read it with understanding, the Bible has enabled them to live with a purpose in view, given them a source of present contentment, and has provided a faith and hope for the future. They have “tasted and seen that the LORD is good” (Psalm 34:8); and, being strengthened to better cope with life’s problems and frustrations, have learned to live richer, more satisfying lives as a result.

What a contrast this is to the hopeless and aimless lives of most people. Not recognizing their folly, many have cast off all recognition of God and His Word, and refuse to submit to His demands. Are they happier for so doing? By no means. They experience an insatiable hunger for something, they know not what. In desperation they seek a form of escapism from the dull monotony of an existence without purpose. Many turn to drugs. Others, through despair, or sheer boredom seek to end it all, so that suicide is becoming more and more frequent in this age of materialism—an age which has debunked God.

The Bible has the real answer to the greatest problems of life today—both personal and social—if people would but turn to it.

How To Read The Bible

Parts of the Bible are not easy to understand. In fact, they are quite difficult, and some guidance is helpful. Some have felt shocked and disturbed by what they have read therein; others have found sections mysterious and perplexing. If that has been your experience, do not be discouraged; continue reading; carefully seek for the basic message contained therein, for the prize is well worth while.

But do not read impatiently. God has nothing to offer people who are in too much of a hurry to consider His words. Read carefully and with concentration to gain the point. Unfortunately, many go to the Bible with preconceived ideas about what it teaches; others tire quickly when any effort of concentration is required.

Remember, the Bible is *God's revelation to man*, and that "His thoughts are above our thoughts, and His ways above our ways" (Isaiah 55). Therefore, read slowly to get the sense; take time to think upon what you have read; keep a notebook by your side to jot down verses that impress you.

And read with a plan. We can supply you with a plan of daily readings of the Bible that will take you through the Old Testament once and the New Testament twice during the course of a year. Many students have found this practice to be absolutely essential to a better understanding of the whole message of the Scriptures. To follow it properly, you will need to set aside a regular time for Bible reading each day—you may find that difficult, but persevere. By the exercise of willpower and self-discipline you will be able to regularly set aside the twenty minutes a day that our plan requires, and thus help to read yourself rich in the things of God.

Bible reading can become a habit—it is a habit worth cultivating.

Outline Of The Bible

The word "Bible" means *Book*. But it is no ordinary book

*‘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, thoroughly furnished unto all good works’
(2Timothy 3:16).*

that you take up in your hands when you pick up the Bible. Notice the two words on its spine: *Holy Bible*. The word “holy” means *separate*, and, as Bible means *book*, you have in your hands a book that is unique from all others.

The contents page shows it is divided into two parts: the Old and New Testaments. The word “testament” means *covenant*. The teaching of the Bible is based upon certain important covenants of promise that God made with faithful men in times past. It teaches that “Jesus Christ came... to *confirm the promises* made unto the fathers; and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy” (Romans 15:8-9). Again: “There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (2Peter 1:4). These promises have relation to the plan of salvation that God has designed for “whosoever” will respond to His invitation. Their fulfilment will take place at Christ’s second coming.

Actually, the division of the Bible into Old and New Testaments is man-made. In fact, the whole Bible is the revelation of God, and is one complete and indivisible book. Some claim that the Old Testament became outdated when Christ appeared over 1,900 years ago, but that is not so. The New Testament constantly refers the reader back to the Old. In his preaching, Christ told his listeners to “search the Scriptures” (John 5:39), by which he meant the Old Testament, since this was the only one then existing. He reminded the people that those same Scriptures expound the things concerning himself. So, “beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them [*the disciples*] in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27).

The Bible will never be properly understood if the Old Testament is neglected. The gospel, itself, is based upon an Old Testament promise: “God preached the gospel *unto Abraham*, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed” (Gal. 3:8). Much of the Old Testament is prophecy, being fulfilled, or about to be fulfilled today.

The contents page also reveals that the Bible is comprised of 66 different books. In fact, it is a library of books containing history, poetry, philosophy, romance, prophecy, precept, and much more. It reveals the character of God, His message to

humanity, His plan of salvation, His purpose for the future.

This is not presented in the dry and lifeless form of a creed, but in a living account of individuals and nations. It records promises made to them, revelations given them, prophecies proclaimed concerning their future.

The Bible reveals man for what he is. It graphically portrays the man of everyday life, stripped of all camouflage and pretensions—an earthy creature; rapacious, cruel, self-willed, governed by desires that God teaches we must learn to control if we would please Him.

However there are those of whom the Bible speaks, who learned to control themselves through the means that God provides in His Word. The finest example of such a person is God's own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom it is said that none could testify of sin or failure. He was eminently a man who manifested his Father, Almighty God, in word and deed. Following him are many faithful men and women who have endeavored to follow the true principles of righteousness. The Bible invites you to identify yourself with those great heroes of the past, developing a character pleasing unto God, in the sure and certain hope of a resurrection to life eternal in the near future. Godliness "has promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1Timothy 4:8).

The Bible Is Based On Israel

Because of great promises made to faithful Abraham that involved his descendants (cp. Genesis 12:2; 13:15), the Bible is based upon the land and people of Israel. It shows that God chose the people of Israel as His peculiar treasure above all people (Exodus 19:5-6); that He guided them, educated them, revealed His will to them, in order that they might reflect His glory, and that they might be equipped to pass on to others the message of His plan (Deuteronomy 28:9-10).

But, as Jeremiah the prophet, sorrowfully recorded, "They would not hear" (Jeremiah 13:11).

In consequence, God disciplined His people. He overturned the throne of David, and scattered the Jews "into all nations" to humble them. But that was to be only for a limited time. The throne was overturned only "until he come whose right it is" to rule over Israel (Ezekiel 21:27). That one is the Lord Jesus Christ. He was born, and died, as "king of the Jews" (Matthew

2:2; 27:37); for his mother was promised that He would ultimately reign upon the restored throne of David, over the Jewish people (Luke 1:32-33).

He must return to fulfil that promise. When Jesus Christ ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives, his apostles were told by attendant angels: "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).

The Land of the Bible

The Bible records that the land known today as Israel was coveted by other nations. It became the battleground of the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and Romans, as each in turn struggled for world supremacy. Today, Arabs and Jews continue to quarrel over it.

The land of Israel truly has been described as "*the heart of the history of the world.*" It is the place of archaeological treasures, of historical sites and of tremendous importance.

This certainly is the case today; particularly with the world so dependent upon the oil of the Middle East.

Although the people of Israel failed to please God through "lack of knowledge" (Hosea 6:6), He prophesied that He would restore the people to the land in preparation for great changes in the future (cp. Ezekiel 37:21-22). The modern revival of Israel is in fulfilment of these predictions. It witnesses to the imminent return of the Lord Jesus to the earth (cp. Psalm 102:13-16).

Bible reading can help you better understand the significance of the great, dramatic events of our own times, for they fulfil Bible prophecy.

Not A Dull Book

Though it may be difficult to understand in parts, the Bible is not a dull book. It records in graphic descriptions and powerful word pictures, many exciting incidents.

As we read of the wickedness of Sodom on the eve of its destruction, we are appalled at the evil of humanity and sympathise with the concern of Lot as he tried to arouse his relatives to the seriousness of the crisis about to engulf them—and then find that this is typical of the times we live in (see Luke 17:26-30).

We learn of the glory of Israel in the days of Solomon when it was the mart of nations, and the wealth of the world flowed

into Jerusalem, and to the great temple that was constructed there for worship—to find also, that this foreshadows the future (Isaiah 2:2-4).

We feel the agony of Jerusalem, as we hear Jeremiah's cry of anguish for the stricken city, smitten because of the wickedness of the people—yet we learn that a merciful God will ultimately restore and spiritually rejuvenate His ancient people (cp. Jeremiah 31:31-37).

There is nothing dull in this book when it is read aright.

The ancient civilisations of Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome pass in succession before us. We learn how the purpose of God requires the rise and fall of nations (cp. Daniel ch. 2). We hear the groaning of Israelites in Egypt (Exodus ch. 1); travel with Daniel the exile, to mighty Babylon (Daniel ch. 1); stand with Paul on Mars Hill below the temple-enthroned Acropolis in Athens, and listen to the apostle's stirring exposition of the purpose of God (Acts 17:22-31); hear the tramp of Roman legions as they march against Jerusalem to destroy it (Luke 21:24).

The person who derides the Bible as dull has never read it properly!

Bible history is a vivid, rapid-moving story. The Red Sea opens up and Israel is saved through water. Joshua marches into the land of Canaan and conquers it in faith matched by courage. Gideon, with his selected few, destroys the innumerable hosts massed against him, and continues on "faint but pursuing" until victory comes (Judges 8:4). David is elevated from shepherd boy to a world monarch. Amos the herdsman, indicts the sophisticated court of the king, and pronounces God's judgments against wickedness and idolatry. Peter, on the housetop, receives a dramatic vision to teach him that God's goodness is available to all, both Jew and Gentile. The wonderful message of a risen Christ who is to return again as king over a world at peace, "turns the world upside down" (Acts 17:6), and changes the course of human history.

A dull book? Not a bit of it!

Consider the writers. They were drawn from every class of society: kings and peasants, doctors and fishermen, princes and herdsmen, poets and laborers, rich and poor, educated and illiterate. Use was found for all. Each in his own way, like the

individual instruments in a great orchestra, played his own part to produce a symphony of glorious melody, proclaiming the purpose and mercy of God to perishing humanity. As these servants of God were drawn from all stratas of society, so their writings are designed to appeal to those of all classes.

Yet there is no disharmony. Though they were divided by class, period, country, and disposition, there is wonderful harmony in all they wrote. There is no contradiction, no disagreement.

Whence came this wonderful unity? From God. They all wrote by divine inspiration. They were God's agents, proclaiming His message unto humanity, a message summed up in these famous words of the Lord Jesus Christ: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Why Contention Over Its Teaching?

If such unity exists in the Bible, why is there such disunity and contention among men as to its teaching?

It is because men try to impose their own ideas upon the Bible. They read it with preconceived impressions in mind, and search its pages to find texts to give seeming support of their teaching. The result is religious confusion, and many have turned from the Bible. Contradictory doctrines are dogmatically taught, causing some in despair to give up the search for Truth. But the way of life eternal has never been easy. It imposes a challenge on those seeking it. In the past, men were challenged with active persecution; today they are met with ridicule, apathy and error. In former days the Bible was burnt, and men threatened with the Inquisition if they dared set forth the Truth; today they have to manifest moral courage in the face of opposition, confusion and scorn.

The Bible foretold that this would be the case.

It predicted that the time would come when the so-called christian world would be as antagonistic to its truth, as was the Jewish world in the days of the prophets.

Here is a typical prophecy foretelling the present apostasy: "The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their

conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats which God has created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth" (1Timothy 4:1-3).

The wealthiest and most popular church of christendom has been noted for forbidding its priests to marry and commanding its followers to abstain from meats on certain days. The Bible predicted that this would be the case, hundreds of years before Catholicism decreed this as the policy of the church.

It demonstrates that a church can be styled "christian," and yet reject the principles of Christ.

Here is another, similar prophecy: "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts 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 4:2-4).

This is a warning against seductive doctrines taught in the name of Christ, but which do not conform to his true teaching. Christ, himself, distinguished between a "true worshipper" and a false one, and declared that God seeks those to worship Him who do so "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23).

The responsibility for carefully sifting the evidence, and separating the true from the false rests upon each one as an individual.

What God Requires Of Us

Some teach that it does not much matter what we believe, so long as we are genuine in motive. They allege that so long as we accept that Christ lived, died, and rose again, so long as we manifest a little "christianity," read a little of the Bible, go to church occasionally — all is well.

The Bible does not speak that way.

It declares that obedience and a sound belief of the simple fundamentals of God's purpose are essential to salvation. It teaches that the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation, to everyone that *believeth*" (Romans 1:16); that "life eternal" is bound up in a correct understanding of the Truth "concerning the only true God and Jesus Christ" (John 17:3), and that "without faith" (which comes from "hearing the Word of God" — Romans 10:17), it is "impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6).

Christ commissioned his disciples: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16).

Paul taught Corinthian believers: "I preached unto you [*the gospel*], which ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain" (1Corinthians 15:1-2).

These Scriptures clearly show that God requires His servants to understand and believe His purpose, as a condition of salvation.

Why does He demand this?

Because His primary intent is not merely to teach us or to save us, but to change us. He does this through the moral example of Christ, and the influence of his teaching. Both are designed to wean us from the ways of flesh, and develop divine characteristics in us. Christ, himself, prayed on behalf of believers: "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

The Bible is designed to change us mentally and morally, in preparation for a physical change to life eternal at Christ's coming. That is one reason why the Bible is somewhat difficult to comprehend. God desires us to "think" upon these things (Philippians 4:8), that our "profiting may appear to all" (1Timothy 4:15). The Bible is designed to cause us to think in conformity with God's teachings and so change our way of life.

God's Revelation Of Himself

The Bible shows that life eternal is bound up in a knowledge of God. "This is life eternal to know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:3). How can we come to properly "know God?" The study of creation can only take us a certain distance, revealing His omnipotence and His omniscience, but not His character, purpose, or plan of salvation.

We must turn to His revelation of Himself to learn of those things. We soon find that God's revelation of Himself is different from that set forth by christendom. For example, most of the established churches describe God as a "Trinity," but this word, so commonly used by theologians, never once occurs in

the Bible. In fact, the doctrines of the Bible categorically reject such a teaching.

The Church of England *Prayer Book* defines God in the following terms: "*The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and, in this Trinity none is afore, or after another; none is greater, or less than another.*" But the Bible knows nothing of this. In contradistinction to this, the Lord declared: "My Father is greater than I" (John 14:28). "I can of mine own self do nothing" (John 5:30). "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me" (John 7:16). "The first of the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord" (Mark 12:29).

Bible teaching throughout is consistent with the evidence of the Lord Jesus. Thus: "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things" (1Corinthians 8:6). "I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside Me" (Isaiah 45:5).

Therefore on this most fundamental of all doctrines of the Bible, Christendom is at variance with the Bible!

The challenge is: Which will you believe? The church, or the Bible? We can only worship God aright if we know Him as He has revealed Himself in the Scriptures. Nowhere in the Bible is Jesus Christ referred to as "God the Son," and yet this is a common expression of christendom. Jesus Christ is the Son of God (therefore subordinate to God; see 1Corinthians 15:28), being begotten by the power of God, of a virgin, over 1,900 years ago. Mary, his mother was told: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore, also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

The apostles taught: "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you... whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 2:22; 5:31).

If Jesus were equal to the Father, would the appointment of him "to be a prince and a saviour" exalt him? Of course not, for he would be already "equal." In fact, this would make the Son greater than the Father, which is opposed to the Word of Truth. Christ is the Son of God, not God the Son.

God's Revelation Of Man's Nature

Christendom is equally astray from the Bible in its teaching concerning the nature of man. Christendom teaches that a person's body is not the real man, but only a container in which dwells an immortal soul that can live without the body, and will continue do so when the body dies.

On the contrary, the Bible teaches the reality of death of both body and soul. It claims that death is a state of unconsciousness: Thus, man "returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Psalm 146:4). "The dead know not any thing... their love, hatred, and their envy is now perished" (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6). "If the dead rise not... then they also which are fallen asleep *in Christ* are perished" (1Corinthians 15:18).

How could these words be true if souls are immortal, and thus *unable to perish* under any circumstances? Notice it is not the wicked to whom Paul makes reference, but those "asleep *in Christ*." He taught that, apart from a resurrection, they are without hope! This would not be true if they were already in heaven.

In fact, the phrase *immortal soul* never occurs in the Bible. On the contrary, we read: "the soul that sinneth shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4); "he [*Christ*] poured out his soul unto death" (Isaiah 53:12), and similar expressions of death's reality.

The Hope of a Bodily Resurrection from the Dead

Death does not necessarily end all hope for mankind. There is the possibility of a resurrection to life eternal. The Psalmist declared of his hope: "Thou [*God*] which hast shewed me [*David*] great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side" (Psalm 71:20-21). The prophet Isaiah declared of his hope of resurrection: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise... the earth shall cast out the dead" (Isaiah 26:19). Daniel testified: "Many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:2). Jesus stated: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25). Paul declared: "Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I (Paul) am called in question" (Acts 23:6).

God's Revelation Concerning A Future Reward

In contradistinction to christendom, therefore, the Bible clearly sets before us the *reality of death*, and the hope of a *resurrection to life eternal*.

It clearly shows that not all will rise from the dead (Isaiah 26:14; Psalm 49:19-20; 88:5; Jeremiah 51:57; Ephesians 2:12), for the resurrection is primarily for the purpose of judgment. Thus God will only judge those who are amenable to it: those who know His will, whether they obey it or not (cp. John 12:48). All others are in the category described in Psalm 49:20, "Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish... they go to the generation of their fathers (the grave); they shall never see light" (Psalm 49:19-20).

Again, there is conflict between the teaching of christendom and that of the Bible. The former claims that man at death goes to his reward; the latter declares that man is resurrected at Christ's coming for the purpose of judgment and reward. Christ taught: "The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he reward every man according to his works" (Matthew 16:27). "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12).

Paul taught: "Jesus Christ shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom" (2Timothy 4:1). "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (1Corinthians 15:22-23).

Two classes will be represented at the judgment seat: the just and the unjust (Acts 24:15); and what the Bible says concerning their fate makes manifest that christendom is astray from the Word of God. Christendom teaches that the wicked suffer in a hell of sulphuric flame and tormenting devils. The Bible teaches otherwise. It states: "Evil-doers shall be cut off;" "The wicked shall perish." "Transgressors shall be destroyed together; the end of the wicked shall be cut off" (Psalm 37:9, 20, 38). In short, it teaches that merciful oblivion is the destiny of those not worthy of eternal life.

But does not the Bible make reference to hell?

It does. But it is clear, from a little research, that *hell* relates to the grave. The word, in its original form, comes from a root

signifying, *the unseen*. Its Anglo-Saxon form (*hele*) means *to cover*, and is found in such words as *helmet*, a covering for the head. The *hell* of the Bible is a covering for the dead.

The same Greek word, translated *hell* in many passages of the New Testament is rendered "grave." It appears in 1 Corinthians 15:55 where Paul praises the triumph of the resurrection to life over both the grave and death: "O death where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

The "sting of death" will be removed when the righteous "go into life eternal" (Matthew 25:46), are made "equal unto the angels to die no more" (Luke 20:36), and receive "glory, honour, immortality, [even] eternal life" (Romans 2:7).

That is in contrast to the wicked who will suffer "the second death" (Revelation 2:11; 20:6). Having been raised, they will be deemed unworthy of eternal life, and will reap the fruit of their sowing: corruption and death (Galatians 6:8).

God's Revelation Concerning The Devil

A further popular error of christendom is the teaching that the devil is a fallen angel who influences mankind as a god of evil in contrast to the God of good.

What constitutes the devil of the Bible?

It is simply a term describing human nature with its fleshly impulses. Human nature, with its lusts, can be manifested in various ways: personally, communally, politically. I possess it. You possess it. Every member of the Adamic race possesses it. And, in order to deliver us from both it and death, Jesus Christ possessed it, as otherwise he could not have destroyed it. The Bible says so.

Consider the following evidence: "He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:26). "Forasmuch then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood he also himself likewise took *part of the same*; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is *the devil*" (Hebrews 2:14).

It is this devil—human nature, or "sin's flesh" (Romans 8:3)—that tempts us, not the alleged superhuman monster of christendom, that does not, in fact, exist. Thus, "every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed" (James 1:14). Even of Jesus Christ it is written: "In all points he was tempted like as we are" (Hebrews 4:15).

But there was a marked difference between Christ and his brethren. He “did no sin” (1Peter 2:22); they “all sin” (Romans 3:23). Thus Christ, having “triumphed” over sin, having figuratively and literally “crucified the flesh with the lusts thereof” (Galatians 5:24), “led captivity captive” (Ephesians 4:8), for the Father “raised him from the dead” (Acts 13:30), so that “death hath no more dominion over him” (Romans 6:9). By this means he became “the firstfruits unto God” (1Corinthians 15:23).

Those who follow in his steps (1Peter 2:21) will be raised from the dead, and their bodies changed in nature to “be fashioned like unto his glorious body” (Philippians 3:21). The Bible sums up: “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 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” (1John 3:1-2).

Eternal life is thus a matter of grace and well-doing now. It is spoken of in the Bible as a subject of promise and hope — not as christendom affirms, the present possession of every person. Paul declared that he lived “in *hope* of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before” (Titus 1:2). John taught: “This is the *promise* that He has promised us, even eternal life” (1John 2:25).

God’s Revelation Concerning Christ’s Coming

Christendom teaches that heaven, the dwelling place of God, is the abiding place of the righteous. The Bible says that this is to be the earth. It teaches that “no man hath ascended up to heaven” (John 3:13), not even David, the man after God’s own heart (Acts 2:34). It teaches that “the earth hath He given to the children of men” (Psalm 115:16), and that “the meek shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5).

Of course, the earth then will be a very different place from what it is now. Christ will return personally and visibly (Acts 1:11) to set up his power and authority in the earth (1Corinthians 15:24-25). He will bring mankind into subjection to his righteous laws and government (Isaiah 2:2-4), changing the present blighting political conditions everywhere in

evidence (Psalm 72), to establish such conditions as will fulfil the terms of the angelic song at his birth, and the petition of his own prayer: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill toward men." "Thy kingdom come, that Thy will may be done in earth."

At that time, those approved in his sight will reign with him on the earth (2Timothy 2:12; Revelation 5:9-10; 20:4). They will exercise "power over the nations" (Revelation 2:26), for in that day, it will be said: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 11:15).

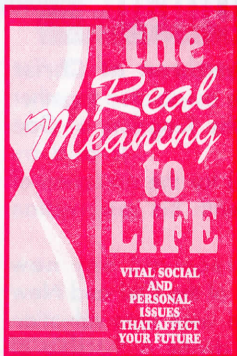
God's Invitation To You

God declared of Jesus Christ: "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matthew 17:5). If we hearken to Christ, we will learn how to obtain eternal life and an everlasting inheritance upon earth at his coming. His message for us is summed up in his commission to the Apostles: "Preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

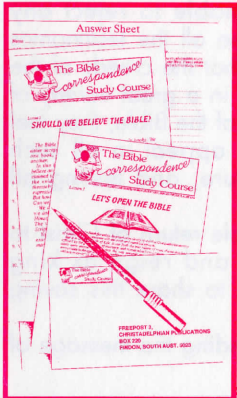
What the Lord has joined together we must not put asunder. First we must "believe the gospel." What does it constitute? Can you define it with certainty? You need to understand what it teaches. Having endorsed the gospel, we must be baptised. That involves bodily immersion in water (Romans 6:4) after understanding and endorsing the first principles of Bible truth (Romans 6:17). Mere sprinkling is no adequate substitute for baptism, for the latter involves a "going down into water" (Acts 8:38).

But more than belief and baptism is required to secure salvation. There must be a "continuance in well-doing." (Romans 2:7). Christ declared: "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14).

Death is inevitable; but the invitation of the Bible is to accept God's invitation to life. The invitation is open to you, and we urge that you heed it. Remember: the times are significant; the issues are vital; you owe it to yourself and your family to seek God's way. Why not pay yourself the honour of seeking that way now!



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...or, as the name implies, the **Brethren of Christ** (**Hebrews 2:11**), are a body of people associated together by a belief in the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ (**Acts 8:12**); and by immersion into Christ (**Galatians 3:27**) for the remission of sins (**Acts 2:38**) and identification with his resurrection (**Romans 6:5**).

They do not profess to have received any new revelation, but hold that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are able to make a person wise unto salvation (**2Timothy 3:15-17**). Believing in the divine authorship of the Bible, they think it only reasonable to reject any interpretation which fails to harmonise all the testimonies of the Holy Scriptures; and, finding that the creeds of the various existing religious groups are, in a great variety of ways, opposed to the direct teaching of the Bible, they feel compelled to stand apart, making appeal in all such matters to the statements of Scripture, and testing all teachings thereby.

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