

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH IN GOD



NOT BY
PAPAL INDULGENCES

THE faith-energising principles of God taught in the Bible are superior to any man-made ritual and observance. The church system has consistently superimposed liturgies and ceremonies on the simple, saving truths of the Scriptures. However, salvation does not depend upon the observance of rituals, but on the understanding of the scriptures, and a personal identification with its teachings. This booklet sets before the reader the contrast between church formalities, and Bible guidance. The difference is very evident in the Catholic practice of indulgences. The writer, having a background of previous involvement in the church system, sets before the reader in this booklet the true requirements for believers. We ask the reader to carefully examine the evidence with an open Bible, to determine the gospel of salvation. We welcome further questions and comments which can be addressed to the editor at the address below.

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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Justification by Faith in God,



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WE appeal to all thinking people who read this booklet, regardless of denominational status or conviction, to personally consider the continuing agreement of Protestants with the Catholic Church. We ask those who see dangers in joining with the Church of Rome, to readily examine the Bible evidence concerning the doctrine of justification by faith in God.

Our appeal is not a protest against any system, religious or political, but we feel obligated to make a stand against error as opposed to the true teaching of the Bible, upon the basis of the statement of the apostle Paul: ***“Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good”*** (1Thessalonians 5:21). It is important to seek the truth of God’s Word, and to understand what is required of a believer.

Prove all Things: a Personal Responsibility!

As a young man, the writer had considerable involvement with various denominations, including Catholics. Having been brought up in the Church of Christ, he was anxious to find the truth of the Bible; he desired to discover its real meaning. He went to his minister, asking, “I am a bit hazy on the subject of the state of the dead; where do they go when they die? What is the Bible’s teaching on this matter?” The minister pointed to a couple of Bible passages on the subject.

However I had more questions until, in the end the minister, in frustration said: “Why are you asking all these questions?”

Leave the matters of Bible interpretation to me. If you continue pressing for answers in this manner, you'll end up becoming a spiritual tramp." In those words he discouraged me from personal study and enquiry, implying I was moving from Scripture to Scripture aimlessly, being unskilled and unemployed in these matters, when all I needed to do as a member of the congregation was to listen to him whose business was to deliver the Word of God.

However, his remarks had the opposite effect on me. When I read Bible passages such as: "*Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good.*" I realised that the apostle Paul wrote to ordinary men and women, not to the clergy. He wanted them to understand they had a personal responsibility to find out what is Truth. The prophet Isaiah speaks in a similar fashion in relation to God's Word: "*To the law and to the testimony! If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them*" (Isaiah 8:20). We must ask the question, irrespective of religion, irrespective of denomination, of whatever teachings people present: can they withstand the test of the Bible? Do they agree with the teachings of Scripture?

That is the challenge we place before the reader of this booklet: "*Prove all things.*" If in doubt — go to "*the law and the testimony!*" Otherwise we might well be found fighting against God, and remaining in ignorance of His declared Truth.

The Gift of God not to be Purchased with Money

The Roman Church demands the payment of indulgences, in order to obtain salvation from supposed threats as limbo, purgatory, and burning hell. Yet the Bible knows nothing of their existence. Instead, it declares concerning believers in God: "*Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain conversation [which means their past way of life] received by tradition of your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*" (1Peter 1:18-19).

Note that Peter says the believers were not justified (made right, or redeemed from sin) by any gold, silver or money whatever. Some in the apostles' days tried to do this, as is

recorded in Acts ch. 8. A man called Simon offered money to obtain the power of God. He tried to buy his way into the kingdom of God, believing that money could pardon sin, and give him the power of God. And "when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostle's hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, 'Give me also this power that on whomsoever I lay hands he may receive the Holy Spirit.' But Peter said unto him, 'Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the *gift of God* may be purchased with money'" (vv. 18-20). Peter condemned Simon for his wicked attitude, and his name became synonymous with the term "simony," which describes the selling of indulgences for material gain.

Eternal life is the gift of God. It is *a gift*, not something that we already possess, or can purchase — and this is taught by the Lord Jesus and the apostles throughout the New Testament.

Therefore the question must be asked: Are we justified by paying money or indulgences to obtain salvation, or are we justified by faith and belief in what God has stated in His Book?

Romans ch. 5 explains what justification by faith really means. Paul says: "*Therefore being justified* [which word means "to be made right"] *by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access through faith into his grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God*" (v. 1).

The apostle Paul clearly shows that believers are justified by faith. Therefore if there was a need to save relatives of friends out of "purgatory" (as the Church of Rome alleges), then Paul should have added the words: "However, if you don't quite make it while you are alive, we can actually help you when you are in purgatory and get you into the Kingdom of God at a later stage."

But no! The apostle clearly states, it is *faith*, not indulgences, that provides the hope of salvation.

We need to carefully consider the Bible teaching concerning faith, for Paul declares that by our *faith* we are made righteous before God. Consequently, without this quality, we cannot presume ourselves as approved by God in any circumstance whatever.

Faith Comes by Hearing the Word of God

What really is faith? How do we obtain it? What does it achieve for us? These questions must be clearly understood by those who seek the salvation of God, and desire to honour Him.

It is here where that the errors of the Roman Catholic Church are made so obvious. Hebrews 11:1 is a masterful explanation of faith by the apostle Paul: "*Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*" Note that faith is *substance*. In other words, it is tangible, real, substantial.

Everyone has the responsibility to develop this characteristic and to manifest the kind of faith God seeks in His people.

Another translation renders this verse: "Faith is the confident anticipation of things hoped for; the full persuasion of things not seen." That is to say: Faith is the full persuasion of things that we hope for, by evidence that we cannot see. It is the ability to clothe the future with reality, and to believe in something substantial, which is yet to come.

This teaches that our future, that for which we hope, must be so real to us, that it affects our present life. Faith is not a misty dream; it is not believing in the unrealities, such as winging to heaven after death, or of the earth burning up, or any such dogma which is not taught in the Bible. Faith is *substance*, that which is trustworthy, based on the reality of what God has revealed for the future. Faith must be developed upon the clear teachings of the Scriptures.

When faced with the question, what is going to happen in the future, faith enables us to answer in a practical way, concerning the real, tangible future, the destiny of mankind and the earth, about the return of Christ and his future reign on earth.

But, reader, this is the challenge: Is your hope of the future clear, real, tangible? Are you able to present Bible teaching to support your faith?

We Cannot Please God Without Faith

When Paul speaks about faith, he points to that which *justifies* us before God: "Without faith it is impossible to please Him. For he that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

How do we get the quality of faith that pleases God? For without it we cannot honour or serve Him, no matter how "religious" or sincere we might be. The faith God seeks is a reality, and has a future, practical hope. It is based upon a correct understanding of the Scriptures, for the apostle Paul says in Romans ch. 10:17 that *"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."*

Faith develops from a diligent application, hearing and reading of the Word of God. It is not obtained from listening to paid ministers who demand obedience to their church system, rather than to God's Word.

It might surprise you when you open your Bible and carefully read its message, that it never mentions purgatory, indulgences, penances, etc. In this it challenges the Roman Catholic Church! But when you ask clergymen about this amazing revelation, the reply would be something like the statement found in the New American Bible, [Catholic Study Edition], p. 13: *"Only through the church can the proper interpretation of the Bible be made. The church produced the scriptures, and is the one that interprets them."* This is the common response by the Catholic Church, demanding absolute authority to explain the Bible, contrary to what the apostle Peter taught. He did not say, "I want you to go to the elders and ask them what the Bible means." He did not leave on record the instruction: "I want you to go to the clergymen of the day and get them to interpret the Bible for you." Yet, the apostle Peter is held by the Church to be the first Pope! He never claimed any such position, but wrote: *"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation [i.e., no prophet's own prompting] For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"* (2Peter 1:20-21). He shows that it is not a private exposition of God's wisdom, but that the Scriptures were given by the inspiration of God, and are to be searched out individually (vv. 1-10). Peter later urged his readers to personally read the writings of his fellow-apostle Paul, declaring: *"Account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also*

according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you" (2Peter 3:15).

Further, in 2Peter1:2-4, the apostle says to *all* believers, not just a select few of them, such as the clergy, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord. According as His divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the *knowledge* of him that has called us to glory and virtue. Whereby are given unto *us* exceeding great and precious promises that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Further: "beside this, giving all diligence add to your faith virtue [*moral actions*]; and to virtue *knowledge*" (v. 5). By adding knowledge (or belief) to their virtue (a moral way of life), he adds that "if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the *knowledge* of the Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 8). Then to the laity, the common people, Peter declared: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy whereunto ye do well to take heed... in your hearts" (v. 19).

This "more sure word of prophecy" is now found in the Bible. Peter urges us to give heed to the Bible in our heart. But this is not what the Roman Church believes, for it demands acceptance of its authority, absolute adherence to its teachings and practices, without regard to what is declared in the Bible.

The Bible is not Church Property

History records that "authentic interpretation of the church was formally stated by the Council of Trent." The council ordained "that no one relying on his own ingenuity in matters of faith and morals pertaining to the development of christian doctrines should distort the sacred scriptures to suit himself contrary to that sense in that the Holy Mother Church has held and continues to hold whose place it is to judge the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures." Further: "Indiscriminate reading of the Bible with independent interpretation was forbidden by Pius IV in 1564. And for the same reasons non-catholic Bible societies established to spread Bible translations to the interpreter without church guidance were reproved by Pius VII."

This is not the teaching of the Bible. Proverbs 25:2 declares: "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honour of kings is to search out a matter." In the original Hebrew it reads this way: *"It is the glory of God to conceal the Word, the honour of kings is to search out the Word."* God has produced His Word (the Bible) in such a way that it takes honest effort, willingness, and time to read its pages. It contains a wonderful balance of literature, in poetry, symbology, history, parable and prophecy. God has structured His Word in such a way as to conceal His Truth, so as to encourage readers to diligently apply themselves. This gives value to God's Word; its treasures will be discovered only by those with determination to search for them. It remains a closed book to those without true interest or resolution. Discovery of the truth of God is by firmly established principles revealed in the parable of the Lord Jesus Christ of a wise man who built his house upon a rock. The Lord pointed out that the man had to move away the surface and get down to the firm rock in order to anchor his house securely. Thus, to make our minds active, we must go beyond mere superficialities. Once we dig under the surface, we shall find what the Bible has to tell us.

It is the wisdom and good pleasure of God to conceal His Word, and the honour of those with keenness of mind to search it out.

Would we leave it in the hands of someone else, when God demands that our own minds be working? To personally find His Truth for ourselves? Otherwise we might well follow the wrong teachings that others have embraced in the Church, and be led astray from the true gospel of salvation.

Challenging the Church: John Wycliffe

Many centuries ago a man by name of John Wycliffe challenged the Church ruling which forbade the personal reading of the Scriptures. This brought upon him the wrath of the Catholic system, which declared: *"Master Wycliffe translated the gospel out of Latin into English which Christ had entrusted to the clergy and the Doctors of the church that they might minister it to the laity, and to the weaker sort, so that by this means the gospel is made vulgar and laid more open to the common people, and even to women who can read."*

The Bible is regarded as exclusive church property; committed to the care of the clergy, who alone are able to explain it. For this reason the early Roman church determined that the Scriptures should be denied even to the most learned laymen, "to protect its teaching."

But nowhere does the Bible say that an organisation of clerics is entrusted with its interpretation. Instead it teaches that all men and women should open their minds to read and study it. The apostle Peter told those in Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost: "it shall come to pass, that *whosoever* shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21).

God's Word provides the answers to all the questions of life. For those who respect His Word concerning the Church system, known in the book of Revelation as "Babylon the Great," it warns to "*Come out of her My people that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues*" (cp. Revelation 13:8; 18:4-24; 2Thessalonians 2:3; 2Timothy 3:16; Psalms 11:93; 138:2).

A Pious Fraud

The Bible and history combine to show that the teachings and practices of the Roman Catholic Church are nothing more than *religious fraud*. The *History of Indulgences* demonstrates their unscriptural nature.

In AD1300, Pope Boniface VIII proclaimed a year of Jubilee for the purpose of indulgences. The church became extraordinarily liberal in giving out indulgences, and many were granted to those who made pilgrimages that year. Consequently about two million people visited the tomb of Peter and devoted so much treasure that it required two priests to rake up the money, day and night, during that year.

Much of the money was used by the Pope to enrich his relatives, the Gaetani, who acquired castles and estates, much to the anger and disappointment of the Roman citizens. Because of those events the writers of the Catholic Encyclopaedia were compelled to state, that since the granting of indulgences was linked to money, many abuses were commonplace: "*The practice was fraught with grave danger; it became a fruitful source of evil... a means of raising money. Indulgences were*

employed by mercenary ecclesiastics as a means of material gain... abuses were widespread" (vol. 7, pp. 786-7).

One of the worst abuses was that many who sold indulgences to sinners were the greatest sinners themselves, yet they impudently offered pardon for sins! In the year 1450, the Chancellor of the Oxford University complained that indulgence sellers would wander over the land and issue a letter of pardon, sometimes for 2 pence, sometimes for a glass of beer, and sometimes for a night with a whore!

Martin Luther's Theses

At the time of Martin Luther, who opposed the papal authority, construction work was being carried out at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. A special appeal was made by the Pope to raise money by the granting of indulgences. One church official, in particular, by name of Johann Tetzel, was appointed to sell indulgences to raise money for the purpose, and travelled all over Germany. A number of eyewitness accounts recorded his activities when he came into some of these German towns, and include the following: *"A cross was set up in the midst of the church and a Pope's banner displayed in front of the cross, where a large iron chest was set up to receive the money. The people were induced by various ways, in order that they might buy indulgences..."*

Johann Tetzel carried with him a picture of the supposed devil tormenting people in purgatory, and would frequently repeat the words that were on the front of the chest: *"As soon as the money in the casket rings, the troubled soul from purgatory springs."* The rich poured in the money, the poor scrambled to throw in the little they had, in order that they might buy pardons to get their loved ones out of purgatory.

In those days a custom existed that university members who wished to put forward certain opinions and open them up for discussion, could publicly post them to invite general discussion on any such issues. Such statements were called "theses."

The reformer Martin Luther, then a Doiminican monk and lecturer at Wittenberg University, nailed his ninety-five *theses* to the door of the castle church, protesting against the sale of papal indulgences. Luther proclaimed that *"Divine forgiveness*

certainly could not be bought or sold, when God offers it freely." The 27th point of his document was a direct challenge to the fraud and error perpetrated by the church, for which he was excommunicated. His notice read: "*Martin Luther — 27th point: The said indulgences are pious frauds. Indulgences do not avail those who gain them for the remission of the penalty due to actual sin in the sight of God's justice.*"

It is a fact that after nearly five centuries, the Catholic church remains astray from the Bible. It still demands indulgences from its followers, and offers remission from sins. How then can the Lutheran church, which owes its origin to Martin Luther, today seek closer association and identification with the Church of Rome and the Pope himself, who is described by the apostle Paul in 2Thessalonians 2:3, as the "Man of Sin"? The church, in common with mankind, has rejected the wisdom of God, and failed to uphold the truth of the Scriptures. This attitude is now seen in the Ecumenism of various religions returning to their "mother church."

Indulgences: of God or Men?

The Catholic Church conducted a prosperous business in the Middle Ages. The church system was powerful and wealthy. Much of that wealth was obtained by the sale of *relics* — supposed bits of the cross of Christ, of the crib in which the Lord was born, and a whole range of other fake items — fabrications without any real connection to Christ. This wealth drawn by the church was further increased by the sale of offices and indulgences.

There is no evidence in the Bible of the Catholic teaching concerning indulgences. The church defines "indulgences" this way: "Catholics relate baptism to the salvation of infants, and allege that 'sins that are committed after baptism can be forgiven, through the sacrament of penance'." (Catholic Encyclopaedia, vol. 7, p. 783). It is one of the Seven Rites of the Catholic liturgy, whereby, according to church teaching, all sins can be forgiven. Penance after confession, involves the repetition of a set form and number of prayers, the 'Paternoster' and 'Hail Mary,' of reciting the Lord's Prayer using the rosary, involving self-mortification, grief, etc. In fact, a whole range of rituals are

ordered by the church to express sorrow for sins followers have committed.

But there still remains, in church teaching, the temporal punishment required by divine justice. This requirement must be fulfilled, according to the church, either in the present life or in the world to come, that is, in purgatory. "An indulgence," says the Catholic Encyclopaedia, "gives the repentant sinner the means of discharging this debt during his life on earth."

We quote the example of a Catholic who lived on the island of Malta, and who paid 500 Maltese pounds to the local priest in order that one of his relatives might escape from purgatory. Unfortunately, particularly in Malta, the church plays very heavily on the emotions of those who have deceased relatives, which it claims languish in purgatory. Thus, once having paid the 500 Maltese pounds, a number of Masses were organised for this follower, in order that the soul of the relative might be released from purgatory. However, the priests are not really sure as to when the soul exits from purgatory; so there is repetition of: "We better have a few more pounds [*or dollars*]... just in case..." A number of credits or points are available for purchase, and once a certain number of points has been achieved, the time arrives when the relative "exits from purgatory." Thus, a foolish and wicked error insisted by the demands of the church, is fixed in the emotions of its catholic devotees. The blind trust millions of men and women have in the Catholic system is exhibited in the example of a friend of the writer whose mother paid 100 pounds to purchase a chair so she would not have to stand for a lengthy period whilst waiting in the long line to enter heaven!

Basis or Source of Catholic Indulgences.

The Catholic Encyclopaedia (vol. 7, p. 784), teaches that the basis or source of indulgences is "the treasury," or storehouse. By this is meant the "infinite redemptive work of Jesus Christ who is the propitiation for sins" ("propitiation" really signifies "mercy seat;" a covering). Further, claims the encyclopaedia, "*besides* the work of Christ there are the satisfactory works of the blessed Virgin Mary, undiminished by any penalty to sin, and the virtues, penances, sufferings of the saints, vastly exceeding any

temporal punishment which these servants of God might have incurred."

Thus there is said to be a great reservoir or treasury of the works of Jesus Christ, of what he accomplished on the cross, the resurrection, as well as all these other things that the saints, in addition to the blessed Virgin Mary, have accomplished. Because of these works which have been performed, there is an extra supply, or treasure of merits, which make it possible for indulgences to be shared with other Catholics who are not as saintly.

Yet, indulgences are nowhere mentioned in the Bible, nor does it mention any incident where such a religious ceremony was conducted. The use of such practices is against every principle of godliness.

Justification is by Faith

What is it that makes us righteous before God — is it *indulgences* or *faith*?

In 1John ch. 1:7, the Bible teaches that "*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, cleanses us from all sin.*" This is not speaking of some sins or of portions of sin, where one can tap into a treasury of Mary, and other saints. The Bible nowhere mentions purgatory, indulgences, or penance. It states unequivocally that the blood of Christ cleanses us from *all* sin.

Furthermore, the Bible declares that Christ "is the propitiation for our sins" (1John 2:2). The word "propitiation" signifies "mercy seat; covering; atonement." It refers to a religious ceremony conducted in Old Testament times under the Law of Moses, when the high priest would go once a year into the Holiest of Holies of the tabernacle and sprinkle blood on the *mercy seat* of gold, in order that the sins of the people would be atoned, and forgiven in a typical or symbolic sense (see Hebrews 10:4, 11).

Today the work of Jesus Christ has fulfilled and replaced the Old Testament mercy seat. The apostle John says that the Lord Jesus is our "propitiation." Through his shed blood we can have forgiveness of sins. The *blood of Christ* cleanses us from all sin.

There is no place for the virgin Mary, or for any of the alleged "saints" that have "vastly exceeded any temporal punishment that any man might incur," in this matter of forgiveness. It is Jesus Christ alone who is our mercy seat; he alone is the means of our forgiveness; his name alone provides the means of salvation. The apostle Peter stated *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12).

We therefore ask the question: if Christ is our mercy seat, and if his blood cleanses us from all sin, in what way can the merits of Mary and of other saints possibly add to this? The answer is: None whatever! Indulgences can add nothing to what Jesus Christ has done for us; and therefore the practice of the Church is useless and unscriptural.

Church Teaching Challenged by the Bible

There are a number of doctrines of the Catholic Church which are out of step with the Bible: the doctrine of purgatory; the immortality of the soul; of rewards in heaven; child-baptism; papal authority, etc. None of these are found in the Bible.

Consider some clear evidence. "Catholicism," p. 47, edited by J. E. Gravel, claims: *"The death of the man however is not the death of his soul. Death is the separation of soul and matter. Soul, in other words, is immortal, it does not of itself corrupt."*

The word "soul" appears 800 times in the English Bible. Catholics claim, the soul is immortal; that it does not corrupt. Yet, never once in the Bible do the words "immortal soul" appear together. The words "immortal" and "soul" are used many times, but they never appear together in the same verse.

In fact, the Bible teaches exactly the opposite. It teaches that the soul of man is mortal, death-doomed. Here is just one statement that reveals this truth: "The Lord delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel, which took it... and smote it with the edge of the sword, all the souls that were therein..." (Josh. 10:32). This means that the soldiers of Israel killed every one of the enemy; that the sword entered the soul. But if the soul were immortal, it would not have mattered what the sword smote!

Again, *"He spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence"* (Psalm 78:50). Souls therefore can be

killed by the sword and die. And rescued, for: "Thou hast in love to my soul *delivered* it from the pit of corruption: for Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back." In other words, if God had left the soul in the pit of corruption, the soul would have corrupted, for it speaks of the person's life. "The grave cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy Truth" (Isaiah 38:17-18).

When you open the Bible and search out the meaning of the word "soul" in the Old Testament, you will find the Hebrew word *nephesh*, which simply means "a living, breathing creature." Adam was created a living *nephesh*, thus, a living person. In Genesis 2:7 we read that "the Lord God formed man out of the *dust* of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." He was made out of dust and given breath. That verse declares how "man *became* a living soul" and the Hebrew simply means, "Adam became a living, breathing creature," or "a breathing creature of life." Nowhere does the Bible say that Adam had an immortal soul. The Catholic Church teaches error against God when it alleges that He breathed into Adam a spark of immortality.

The same word *nephesh* is used in Genesis ch. 1 for the creation of the animal world: "God created great whales and every living *creature* that moves." The word "creature" is the word *nephesh*, "soul." Did God breathe immortality into the whales, and all the other creatures? Of course not; reason tells us that. Every living creature, Adam included, had the same breath of life breathed into them and they *became* living breathing creatures. There is no trace in the book of Genesis, the Book of Beginnings, of immortality being given to any living being from birth. The truth is that we do not possess an immortal soul. The Catholic Church is wrong.

On the other hand the teaching of the Bible is clear: Man is fully mortal and perishes at death. The following quotations clearly prove that the death state is one of complete unconsciousness, not of people writhing in agony in hell or in purgatory. "In death there is *no remembrance...*" (Psalm 6:5); "The *dead praise not* the LORD, neither any that go down into

silence" (Psalm 115:17); "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day *his thoughts perish*" (Psalm 146:4); "The living know that they shall die: but the *dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten*" (Ecclesiastes 9:5). The apostle Peter taught on the Day of Pentecost, "let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that *he is both dead and buried*, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day" (Acts 2:29). Therefore David is, for the time being, totally extinct, his body mouldering in the grave, waiting for the day of *resurrection!*

Justified by Faith to Inherit the Kingdom of God

The only hope of the Bible and source of comfort at death is in the hope of bodily resurrection for judgment and everlasting life at Christ's return (2Corinthians 5:10; 1Thessalonians 4:15-16).

The apostle Paul taught that the hope of believers is in the return of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven to the earth, and the resurrection of believers from the grave. He said: "*We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not precede them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first*" (1Thessalonians 4:15-16). Paul did not comfort them with the words, "Why are you mourning? why are you so sad? your dead brethren are in heaven!" He believed that Jesus Christ is to return to the earth and his followers shall be raised from the grave.

The Lord Jesus demonstrated the *power of the Resurrection*, raising Lazarus after he had been in the tomb four days, allowing his body to begin corrupting. Martha, Lazarus' sister, in spite of her grief, upheld the truth, confessing to the Lord: "I know that he shall rise again, *in the resurrection, at the last day.*" She did not say, "I know that he is now in heaven." To prove the importance of resurrection, *Jesus then raised Lazarus from the grave* (John 11:21-26).

Immortality: Future Hope

A question for the Catholic priest: If immortal souls are in heaven, clothed in immortality, what need is there of resurrection at the return of Jesus Christ? How can souls who have enjoyed

eternal bliss for thousands of years in heaven, be given the reward of immortality when Jesus Christ returns? The priest will answer: *"It is to unite the body with the soul. And then the person stands before the judgment seat of Christ."*

Question: "Why?" Answer: *"It is to give an account of what has been done during their life, whether good or bad."*

Question: "When a person is standing before the judgment seat he is either rewarded or condemned?" Answer: "Yes!"

Has not the person already been enjoying heaven or suffering hell? Why bring someone who has for ages been in heaven in bliss, or in hell in torment, and unite him with the body to be judged and then send him back to where he was before? Conclusion: It does not make sense. It is not only illogical and foolish; it is unscriptural.

The *hope* of the Bible is eternal life. Immortality is *promised*; it is not something that we already *possess*.

The clear teaching of the Bible is that when a person dies he goes to the grave and the only hope is of a resurrection at the coming of Jesus Christ.

How then can we be "justified by faith"? By believing in the true and wonderful teachings of the Bible, and developing an understanding of God's ways. *We are made righteous by faith* — the confident conviction that one day, in the very near future, Jesus Christ will return to the earth and reward every man and woman according as their works have been.

It is to this wonderful future that we urge the reader prepare. It is done by opening the pages of the Bible, and reading it without the interference of priest or pastor. The message of the Bible is clear and satisfying. Read it for yourself, and listen to the clear voice of Truth. Please write to us for any further assistance we might be able to provide you, so that you, with us, can rejoice in the true principles of faith and obedience: and honour God who will reward such an attitude in hope of His coming kingdom on earth.

— S. Hornhardt.

**Should you have
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