

we make him a liar.’ (1 John 1:9,10)

Jesus Christ is the God-given saviour, through whom forgiveness and salvation have been made possible. He is the evidence of God’s continued love for his creation: ‘In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.’ (1 John 4:9) He is the only God-given priest, through whom forgiveness is to be sought now. He came as a man, and he was tempted as a man in order ‘that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people’.

(Heb. 2:17)

God’s call is to come to him, to adopt the name of Christ in baptism and to look for God’s forgiveness through him. Forgiveness through Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation, to eternal life. Christ, and Christ alone, ‘is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.’ (Heb. 7:25)

## The Christadelphians

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Please be assured that anything connected with the Christadelphians is entirely free, and based wholly upon Christ’s precept, “freely ye received, freely give”. Christadelphians, or as the name implies, brethren in Christ, are a body of people (established initially in the mid nineteenth century) bound together by a wholehearted belief in the Bible. We do not profess to have received any new revelation, but hold that the Bible itself is able to make one “wise unto salvation” (2 Tim. 3:15-17). Believing in the Divine Authorship of the Bible, we do not accept any interpretation which does not harmonise with its teaching as a whole. Finding that the creeds and practices of those who claim to be Christian are in many ways opposed to this teaching, we feel compelled to stand apart from them. We believe in the personal, visible return of Christ to the earth, to establish his throne and reign thereon, and we seek to share this knowledge with others. However we guarantee that we will not pressurise you in any way, if at any time you wish to discontinue contact.

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# The forgiveness of sins

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# The forgiveness of sins

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'Thy sins are forgiven' said Jesus to the sick of the palsy. The Jews were offended and indignant. 'He blasphemeth', they said, 'who can forgive sins but one, even God?' They were right in believing that forgiveness was the prerogative of God alone, but the miracle which followed should have convinced them that Jesus' authority was God-given. **(Mark 2:1-12 R.V)** By it, Jesus demonstrated what the Apostle Paul later explained to the Corinthians: 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.' **(2 Cor. 5:19)**

Forgiveness is a theme which runs right through the teaching of Christ and his apostles. It is a theme that is meaningless unless man needs forgiveness and reconciliation with his Creator. When the Apostle Paul wrote, 'All have sinned and come short of the glory of God' **(Rom. 3:23)** he was stating a truth fundamental to the message of both Old and New Testaments; without which Christ's teaching was meaningless and his death on the cross futile. Christ's mission opened with the words of John the Baptist, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world'. **(John 1:29)** As it drew to a close, Jesus explained to the disciples the real significance of his first coming: 'Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them. Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission (forgiveness) of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.' **(Luke 24:45-47)** It is not surprising that the call to repentance and the promise of forgiveness were dominant themes in the preaching of the apostles. 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.' **(Acts 2:38 R.S.V.)**

'Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out'; **(Acts 3:19)** '... through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.' **(Acts 13:38)**

This message of forgiveness was firmly rooted in the Old Testament. In the wilderness, God revealed himself to Moses as one 'keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.' **(Exodus 34:7)** The Psalmist recognised the true nature of man when he asked, 'If thou Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.' **(Psa. 130:3-4)** The prophet wrote 'Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity... He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities.' **(Mic. 7:18-19)** This divine characteristic of mercy and forgiveness found its highest expression when the Son of God, Jesus Christ, came as a saviour for sinful mankind: 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son...' **(John 3:16)**

Jesus is the divinely-given redeemer. Only through him is God's forgiveness granted, and only through divine forgiveness can man escape death - the inevitable result of sin, and gain life. This forgiveness is essentially a divine gift, given to those who listen and respond to the call to repentance. God's call to man to repent, is fundamental to Christ's message and is constantly reiterated throughout the New Testament. 'I am come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance' said Jesus. **(Matt. 9:13)** God 'now commandeth all men everywhere to repent', declared Paul to the Athenians. **(Acts 17:30)** Repentance implies not merely a confession of sin, but a complete change of heart and way of life, total dedication to a new life controlled by

the commands of Christ. In every conversion recorded in the New Testament, repentance is associated with baptism; not just a visible and public confession of faith in Jesus, but a symbolic cleansing from past sins and a ritual association with Jesus' death and resurrection (for the scriptural teaching on baptism, see Leaflet No. 50). This single act of repentance was valueless unless it was followed by a life totally different from that which preceded it. 'Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance' said Jesus. **(Matt. 3:8)** Paul told the Gentiles that they should not only repent and turn to God, but should 'do works meet for repentance.' **(Acts 26:20)**

Repentance in the fullest sense is a way of life, of which baptism is only the beginning. It is a way of life based on separation from the old life and characterised by faith in God and His Son, obedience, a forsaking of sin and the showing of love and forgiveness to others. The earliest disciples, baptized on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection, not only repented and were baptized, but they 'continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers'. **(Acts 2:42)** Forgiveness of others is an essential element in this truly Christian way of life, as Jesus made clear in the prayer he gave his disciples. 'Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven' he said on another occasion. **(Luke 6:37)** 'Be ye kind one to another', Paul wrote, 'tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.' **(Eph. 4:32)** No less important is the recognition and confession of personal sins. God's forgiveness is only for those who recognise that inevitably they fall far short of the standard of conduct set before them by Jesus. 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins...if we say that we have not sinned, ►►