

GOSPEL GEMS

Volume 1

by

Bill Dillon

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Foreword

Bill Dillon has made a great contribution to the cause of Christian journalism with these concise, spiritual gems of wisdom and truth. The gathering together of these gems of truth cover a broad scope of Biblical inquiry. Those who read or use these items in any way will broaden their knowledge of truth and enrich their faith.

Bill Dillon is well qualified to write these Gospel Gems. From a rich background of study, reading, meditation and application of God's word, they come forth refined in thought and presented in a readable style so that those who read them may have a clear understanding of the things written.

Read these pointed truths and give thanks to God for a Christian brother who presented the unchanging gospel in such a brief but grand way. Use them in some way that will implant the truth deep within the bosom of someone you love that they might have a greater faith in the One who has redeemed us from our sins.

Max R. Miller, Evangelist

Preface

Gratitude is expressed for being able to print this volume of small sermons. It is hoped they shall be effective in reaching the lost. Originally, these articles appeared in a weekly column in *The Paducah Sun* in Paducah, Kentucky from 1981-1983. Because of the favorable reception by the public and the gracious encouragement of many brethren, the articles have been put into book form. May they be freely used as seed ideas for sermons, spot announcements for radio and television advertisements or reprinted in other papers for any good they may accomplish.

Bill Dillon

February, 1984

A Statement from the Publisher

I have followed Bill Dillon around over the years as he has moved from place to place while working with the church. I have especially been interested in his mission trips to Ghana, West Africa.

Along with his local church work, and his mission trips, he has also found time to write several books and to publish a monthly magazine, *The Gospel Gleaner*. He has also written for other papers and is a staff writer for *The Voice of Truth International*.

We are always on the lookout for good sound material for publication, and this led us to Bill's door and permission to print some of his books. This one is **Gospel Gems, Volume 1**, followed by **Gospel Gems, Volume 2**. Thank you, Bill, for making these books available to us and we are happy to commend them to our brethren everywhere.

J.C. Choate
Winona, MS 38967
February 9, 1999

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We Cannot Get Away From God, Though We Can Ignore Him

“Get away from it all” is a motto echoed by many in these hectic-paced and trying times. People do need, on occasion, to get away from the job, the city, the noise, the problems, etc. Sadly, many are trying to get away from God, also.

Some try to get away from God by denying He exists. Psalm 14:1 says, “*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.*” Do the stars cease to shine in the day if we say “they don’t exist?” They always reappear in the night. God is there, whether men recognize it or not.

Some try to get away from God by refusing to hear His Word. The prophet Zechariah said concerning the rebellious people of God, “*they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yea, they make their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law...*” (Zechariah 7:11,12). But refusing to hear God’s word wouldn’t stop God’s threatenings (Zechariah 7:13,14). We must hear (Romans 10:17) and believe and be baptized (Acts 18:8) in order to be saved.

Some try to get away from God by submerging themselves in the pleasures of the world (1 Timothy 5:6). More and more men’s thoughts over-emphasize worldly things to

take God's place. But many unhappy souls are learning the thrill of harlotry turns into the agony of the illicit. The road of worldliness glitters only for a season (Hebrews 11:25).

Lives are wasted, minds destroyed, misery and dissatisfaction run rampant, all because people try to escape God.

In the Judgment, no man will succeed in avoiding Jehovah. In Philippians 2:10,11 we are told "*every knee shal bow...every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.*" If you will hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matthew 5:6), God promises wonderful things (Ephesians 1:3,7; Matthew 6:33; Romans 8:28; Hebrews 13:5).

The Good Life

The good life is the life with God. Such living requires men to “*Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth*” (Colossians 3:2). All men should be like Christ “*who went about doing good*” (Acts 10:38). The good life involves presenting the human body as a living sacrifice to God (Romans 12:1,2) and therefore by living soberly, righteously and godly (Titus 2:11,12).

The good life is good because by it we are:

1. **Supplied the necessities of life.** Matthew 6:33 says “*seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.*”

2. **Comforted in our trials.** The Bible says, “*count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptation; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience*” (James 1:2,3).

3. **Encouraged in our disappointments.** The scripture says, “*all things work together for good to them that love God*” (Romans 8:28).

4. **Delivered from dangers.** The greatest danger to any soul is sin. Even one sin is a reproach to God. The good life is a life free from the practice and contemplation of sin (John 8:32), not a freedom to do as we please.

The blood of Christ can wash away sins. We contact the blood in baptism (Romans 6:1-4). Are you living the good life? Anything less is not so good.

HBO

To most people, the above letters mean something entirely different than what is meant by them in this article.

H-means **hear the word of the Lord**. This is the beginning of obedience (Romans 10:17).

B-means **believe the word of the Lord**. This is essential if we intend to be pleasing to our Creator (Hebrews 11:6).

O-means **obey the word of the Lord**. There is no substitute for obedience (1 Samuel 15:22; John 14:15).

In New Testament times, sinners heard, believed and obeyed the gospel. As this was pleasing to God then, it is now also (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 22:16). **Hear, believe and obey** is God's simple plan for saving men.

Popular Error and Unpopular Truth

Often what is favorable to men is unfavorable to God. The Lord says His ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:8,9). Regardless of how popular some ideas of men are, the word of God is always right (Romans 3:4).

It is popular to say, "The conscience is a safe guide." The unpopular truth is that conscience can lead people astray. The conscience can be "seared" (1 Timothy 4:2). One man, in good conscience, even persecuted Christians (Acts 23:1). Conscience is not a safe guide unless educated by God's word.

It is popular to say, "Everyone has a right to be wrong." Politically, we do have the right to believe as we choose; but if heaven is our goal, then we must choose to believe only what the word of God says. Jesus said we will be judged according to His word, not man's ideas (John 12:48).

Which will save us, error or truth? It is better to be unpopular with men and hold the truth, than to be popular with man and believe a lie (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).

Reader, which way for you? Believe and be baptized today (Acts 22:16).

Promises, Promises

The world is full of promises, some broken, some kept. God keeps His. The greatest promise of the Bible is salvation. It's the greatest promise because it can remove the greatest curse, sin. Jesus came to take away sin: "*he was manifested to take away our sins*" (1 John 3:5). Through obedience to the gospel of Christ we can be saved from the power of sin (Hebrews 2:14); the pollution of sin (1 John 1:7); the penalty of sin (Romans 6:23) and the presence of sin (Revelation 21:1-27).

The promises of God are exceeding great and precious (2 Peter 1:4). The Lord holds out the wonderful promises of remission of sins (Acts 2:38); all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3); and eternal life (1 John 2:25). The Bible says "*He is faithful that promised*" (Hebrews 10:23). Do you believe the Lord keeps His promises? To enjoy the promises of the Lord, you must first obey the commands of the Lord. Have you obeyed?

Bible Vitals for Salvation

There are a number of things to which salvation is ascribed to in the Holy Scriptures. We are saved by:

1. **Hearing the gospel** (Romans 10:17)
2. **Faith** (Hebrews 11:6)
3. **Repentance** (Acts 17:30,31)
4. **Confession** (Romans 10:9,10)
5. **Baptism** (1 Peter 3:21)
6. **Calling on His name** (Acts 2:21) (please note that there is a difference in calling out the Lord's name and calling on the name of the Lord (Matthew 7:21)
7. **Hope** (Romans 8:24)
8. **Preaching** (1 Corinthians 1:18)
9. **The Gospel** (1 Corinthians 15:1,2)
10. **Love** (Galatians 5:6)
11. **Grace** (Ephesians 2:8,9)
12. **Working** (Philippians 2:12)
13. **God's Mercy** (Titus 3:5)
14. **Obedience** (Hebrews 5:8,9)
15. **The Blood of Christ** (Hebrews 9:14)

Are you leaving out any of these Bible vitals? Not one of these alone will save but all combined result in salvation.

Happily Never After

Suicide has been called everything from “the Liberator” to “the crime of crimes.” Most suicide attempts fail, but for those between ages fifteen and twenty-four, suicide is a major cause of death. Why would anyone so despair of living?

The Bible tells us that suicide is sin-related. We read of:

1. **Ahithophel** (2 Samuel 15-17). At one time David’s counselor, Ahithophel, became a conspirator with Absalom against David. Ahithophel eventually hanged himself, dying a traitor’s death. Sin causes remorse and regret.

2. **Saul, King of Israel** (1 Samuel 31). Saul “*took a sword, and fell upon it.*” Saul’s end was that of a God-rejected man! (1 Samuel 15:10-23). Sin causes despair and doom.

3. **Judas**. After betraying his Lord, Judas hanged himself and “*went to his own place*” (Acts 1:25). Sin causes grief and guilt.

Apart from God there is “*no hope*” (Ephesians 2:12) but with God, glowing beams of hope, forgiveness, and newness of life surround us (2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:1-4; Colossians 2:12). Don’t despair, the hope of the gospel is help from God.

An Atheist Seldom Dies in that Faith

Bold words are often spoken by those who claim “there is no God.” When days are flowing well and smooth and life is hopeful and strong, such utterances may come easy. But what about the darker days of sickness, financial reverses, loss of loved ones, and...? What of the end of our life? When seconds become short eternities, is it as easy to say “I don’t believe”? Does an infidel’s conviction retreat in face of death?

Think on the words of dying disbelievers:

1. Ingersol, 1899, “O, God, if there be a God, save my soul, if I have a soul.”

2. Hobbes, 1679: “I say again, if I had the whole world to dispose of, I would give it to live one day. I am about to take a leap into the dark.”

3. Gibbon, 1794: “All is dark and doubtful.”

4. Paine, 1809: “Stay with me, for I cannot bear to be left alone!”

Some Things Jesus Did Not Say

Often people talk of what Jesus said but there are many things people think Jesus said that He did not:

1. Jesus did not say “Ye shall be sincere in your beliefs and your sincerity shall make you free.” But He did say, “*Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:32). It is possible for good people to be sincere in their religious convictions and be sincerely wrong.

2. Jesus did not say “Upon this rock I will build my churches and men shall worship at the one of their choice.” But He did say, “*Upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*” (Matthew 16:18). If people can worship in the church of their choice then they can worship the Christ of their choice. Jesus built only one church and He is its head (Ephesians 1:21,22).

3. Jesus did not say, “Whosoever divorces his wife for any cause and marries another woman is free from adultery and can go on his way.” But Jesus did say, “*Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marieth her which is put away doth commit adultery*” (Matthew 19:9). The looseness with which marriage vows are taken and broken today is a disgrace too great to be measured.

4. Jesus did not say, “He that believeth is saved and

can be baptized later if he wants to." But He did say, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*" (Mark 16:15,16). The order Jesus gave is belief, baptism, then salvation; not belief, salvation, then baptism. Think about it!

5. Jesus did not say, "A man can worship God according to his natural leanings; according to the way he is best able to express himself." But Jesus did say, "*God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth*" (John 4:24). Since the "truth" is God's Word (John 17:17), our way of worshipping God must be shown in the New Testament, God's will for man in this age. Can you show New Testament authority for every practice you have in worshipping God?

6. Jesus did not say, "Be tolerant of religious error; all men have a religious right to be wrong, after all no harm is done." But He did say, "*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!*" "*Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?*" (Matthew 23:13,33). "*Not everyone that saith unto me 'Lord, Lord' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven*" (Matthew 7:21).

Reader, to which will you pay attention — to what Jesus did not say or did say?

Which Way Are You Going

Sometimes there are clues which help us to determine which way people are going. A man with a fishing pole and tackle box is going to the pond or lake; a boy with an armload of books is headed for school; a man carrying a lunch box or briefcase is headed for work.

In religion we can tell which way some are going by:

1. **The company they keep.** To run with a worldly crowd can result in worldly behavior (1 Corinthians 15:33).

2. **The places they go.** When Sunday outings and trips interfere with worship services then someone is headed in the wrong direction! (Hebrews 10:25). A little neglect goes a long way (to hell!) (Revelations 3:19).

3. **The things they do.** When God's laws for marriage and the family are scorned; when lust and adultery become commonplace behavior, then someone has taken a wrong turn (Matthew 19:9; Ephesians 5:21,25; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

4. **The goals they seek.** The world seems to be mad — money mad, pleasure mad! “Eat, drink and be merry,” and “grab the gusto” are the sugar-coated phrases Satan uses to deceive folks as to the purpose for life. Spiritual goals are more important than material. Our world seeks grime when it could have glory! (Ecclesiastes 12:13; Matthew 16:23-26).

Although people are going about in various activities, there are basically only two ways for us to be going. You can read about them in Matthew 7:13,14. We hope you are headed in the right direction; but in case you need to make a U-turn, please read Acts 2:38.

Creation Vs. Evolution

Webster says, "Science is knowledge; comprehensive information; classified and established knowledge." Science deals with what is known, or demonstrable or observable facts. The question of the origin of the universe and the ultimate origin of human beings is neither demonstrable nor observable, therefore is a matter for philosophy, not science. The theory of evolution is not science but faith. The idea that a Supreme Being created man and the world is a matter of faith. The question is who has the better basis for faith; evolutionists or creationists? Did the world come into existence by chance or by design? Does the Genesis account of creation conflict with any known scientific fact? Moses wrote "*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*" (Genesis 1:1). Jesus said, "*He which made them at the beginning made them male and female*" (Matthew 19:4).

Calling on the Name of the Lord

Some think that salvation is a matter of merely praying and saying the Lord's name. But careful thinking tells us that "calling on the name of the Lord" is vastly different than calling out the Lord's name! Jesus said *"not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity"* (Matthew 7:21-23).

Calling on the name of the Lord includes obedience to heaven's commands. Saul of Tarsus was told, *"Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord"* (Acts 22:16). Being baptized (an act of obedience) was included in calling on the name of the Lord. Reader, please consider, have you really "called on the name of the Lord" or just called out the Lord's name?

The Truth About Truth

In John 18:38, Pilate asked, “*What is truth?*” This question is still significant today. We need to ask “does truth really exist?” Is there a universal standard of ethics or does truth vary from country to country? Do unchanging principles exist which govern human conduct or is each individual a law unto themselves? Can we be certain that absolute truth exists?

If God exists, then truth exists. Why? Because God is a God of truth (Psalm 31:5). God’s word is truth (John 17:17), and He wants to be worshipped “*in spirit and in truth*” (John 4:24).

If Jesus exists, then truth exists. Why? Because He claimed to be “*the way, the truth and the life*” (John 14:6).

If the church exists, then truth exists. Why? Because the church is the “*pillar and ground of the truth*” (1 Timothy 3:15).

After truth is recognized it should be obeyed to purify the soul (1 Peter 1:22,23; James 1:18). To be a Christian means you know, receive and obey the truth. Through faith in God (Hebrews 11:6); repentance of sins (Acts 17:30,31); confession of Christ (Acts 8:37) and immersion in water for the remission of sins (Galatians 3:26,27) we are brought into Christ.

A life spent in the knowledge of and obedience to the truth is not misspent!

An Exceptional Lesson

It is widely believed and preached that to be saved all that is necessary is to “believe only” or “just receive Jesus as your personal Saviour.” These expressions leave us with the erroneous impression that there is nothing for sinners to do to be saved. The Bible teaches differently; there is something you must do to be saved (Acts 9:6; 22:16; Philippians 2:12).

Listen to what the Lord Jesus Christ said about salvation:

1. *“Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins”* (John 8:24 ASV).

2. *“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish”* (Luke 13:3).

3. *“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”* (John 3:5).

These are commands to be obeyed in order to be a Christian.

Have you obeyed?

Idol Talk

Man is a worshipping being. Departing from divine guidance he succumbed to giving homage to birds, bulls and crocodiles as well as the sun, moon and mythical creatures. So numerous have been the idols of man that scarcely is there a created object that has not, at one time or other, received human veneration. The Bible comments on man's idolatrous habits in Romans 1:25, "*Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever.*" Idolatry is rendering ultimate devotion to an object of limited value. In ancient Israel idolatry brought grief and shame (Jeremiah 11:13; Hosea 9:10), and was punishable by physical death (Exodus 22:20).

Our society today is filled "brim full and running over" with multiplied idols, not all of which are made of wood and stone:

1. **Covetousness is idolatry** (Colossians 3:5). The shrine of prosperity and possessions has many devotees. Sadly, an inordinate desire for wealth has proven to be a cause of spiritual stumbling to many. The Bible says, "*The love of money is the root of all evil*" (1 Timothy 6:10).

2. **A life of ease is idolatry.** Jesus said in Matthew 16:24, "*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*" The cross is not made of feathers and wrapped in velvet, sometimes it's

more like lead wrapped in sandpaper!

3. **Worldly pleasure is idolatry.** Unfortunately for its followers, it is a fading idol; lasting only “*for a season*” (Hebrews 11:25). True happiness endures forever for “*in thy presence is fullness of joy*” (Psalm 16:11).

4. **Compromising the truth is idolatry.** This idol sits on the great benevolent lap of those who prize peace at any price. It’s easy for people who believe nothing to agree on anything. Paul wrote “*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort...*” (2 Timothy 4:2) and “*Hold fast the faithful word*” (Titus 1:9).

Anything that dethrones God from the heart is idolatry. God says “*I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me*” (Isaiah 45:5). Are you an idolator?

The Bible — Defective or Divine?

There is no book in all the earth like the Bible. Many do not believe it. Some say, “Men just got together and wrote it, God had nothing to do with it.” However, we are familiar with books that men have written. Such books are like their authors — perishing and erroneous. Strictly human books approve things humans find pleasurable, while the Bible disapproves things many humans would rather do. Worldly life styles, materialistic outlooks on life, loose moral codes, etc. are promoted by human authors but the Bible condemns any but the proper forms of behavior. Acceptable living to Deity is “godly” (Titus 2:11,12; Romans 12:1,2). Godly living begins in gospel obedience (Acts 18:8).

If men alone wrote the Bible, wouldn't they have written it differently? The Bible is divine because it condemns too many things humans hold dear and approves too many things humans ordinarily find repulsive. Truly, *“Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”* (2 Peter 1:21). “If a man is not familiar with the Bible, he has suffered a loss which he had better make all possible haste to correct.”

The Three R's of Religion

The fundamentals of salvation are **repentance, remission and rejoicing**. Most of the religious world understands the necessity of repentance in becoming a Christian (Acts 17:30,31). The Bible teaches that we must have a desire to live a righteous life.

The remission of sins is obtained by being baptized into Christ (Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:26,27). Water saves no one, but the principle of obedience (the human body openly submitting to the will of God), causes us to be placed in contact with the blood of Christ which can remove all sin (1 John 1:7; Romans 6:1-4).

Rejoicing is the logical result following repentance and remission. In instances of conversion in the book of Acts, rejoicing is to come after repentance and baptism (Acts 8:26-39; 16:25-34).

The Bible speaks clearly about the necessity of repentance, essentiality of baptism, and the blessing of rejoicing in salvation. Will you repent, receive remission, and rejoice?

What's It All About?

Life's complicated ways are enough to confuse anyone. With a hundred voices calling for as many different choices, anyone could get turned around. But, what is the purpose of life? Why are we here?

There is only one book available that gives absolutely accurate instruction on the reason for being. The Bible says the purpose of life is to "*Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man*" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Paul said that obeying the gospel sets us on the right track (Romans 6:1-4). The Christians at Rome had heard the gospel (Romans 10:17); believed the gospel (10:10); had been baptized (6:4,16-18) and then were instructed to live the Christian life (12:1-21).

Additionally, Paul wrote to the Corinthians telling them that "*circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God*" (1 Corinthians 7:19). In other words, obedience is what matters. John wrote, "*For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments*" (1 John 5:3).

The sad thing is, most will not grasp what life is all about — until it is all over! (2 Corinthians 5:10). Do you know what life is all about?

The Answer Book

Life is long on problems but short on solutions. Millions of best selling books have been written to aid us in overcoming difficulties of one kind or another.

While many see the Bible only as “a problem book,” others have learned that the Grand Old Book contains time-tested and true answers to life’s perplexing problems.

The greatest problem of man is sin. Sin is described as filth and vomit (2 Peter 2:20-22); darkness and blindness (2 Corinthians 4:2-6); ignorance and misunderstanding (Matthew 22:29). The Word of God says we can be cleansed from the defilement of sin (John 15:3); our eyes opened and darkness dispelled (Revelation 3:18); and ignorance and misunderstanding replaced by a proper knowledge of God’s will for us (Matthew 11:28-30; 2 Timothy 2:15; Ephesians 5:17).

The problem of life is sin (Romans 3:23). The answer is Christ’s blood (1 John 1:7). The blood of Christ is applied when we are baptized into Christ’s death (Romans 6:1-4).

What's So Important About The Church?

There is not an institution in existence more important to man than the church. Why?

- 1. Christ is the head of the church
(Ephesians 1:22,23).**
- 2. Christ loves the church (Ephesians 5:22-27).**
- 3. The church was purposed, planned and
promised by God (Ephesians 2:20; 3:10,11).**
- 4. The church was foretold by the prophets
(Isaiah 2:1-4; Daniel 2:44).**
- 5. The church was purchased by the blood of
Christ (Acts 20:28).**
- 6. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth
(1 Timothy 3:15).**
- 7. God receives glory in the church
(Ephesians 3:20,21).**

The church is divine in origin, mission, and destiny. The church is the body of Christ into which sinners are baptized (Ephesians 1:22; 1 Corinthians 12:13). Therefore, the church is essential, important and of primary concern to people who are serious about salvation (Acts 2:47).

A Happy Man

Men seek happiness and shun sadness. Who is a happy man? He is not:

1. His own man. Self-made men have a tendency to worship their creator.

2. The world's man. The man of the world drinks from the fountains of lust, greed, etc. The world's man worships the world's goods (Luke 12:15-21) and is conformed to the ways of this world (Romans 12:1,2).

The happy man is God's man. He is in God's kingdom (Colossians 1:13). He lives to do the will of God. He is saved by the grace of God. He studies the word of God (Psalm 1:1,2). He knows all of God's commandments are for his good. When we become God's men, sins are forgiven (Acts 2:38) and a new relationship is begun "in Christ" (Galatians 3:26,27). God's people have the promise of being supplied all necessities of this life (Matthew 6:33) and having "*all things work together for good*" (Romans 8:28). No wonder they're happy!

The Greatest Need of the World

Our society is characterized by mechanical conveniences, escape entertainment, sexual freedom, upward mobility and practically unencumbered leisure. What else could any people need? Is there more to life? What happens when the machines break down? The entertainment is over? The sexual freedom is found out to be nothing but barnyard morality? The mobility becomes stalled? The leisure turns to boredom? What do we say when life's other side is seen; men moan for lack of jobs; women grieve over soaring prices in stores, loved ones die, etc.?

1. Can science help? Science has its place but it can't save the soul. Science can ease some of the suffering through medicine but can't tell the "why" of suffering.

2. Can education help? H.G. Wells once believed more education would make man better but WWII showed some of the most educated nations committing the worst atrocities. Education has a place but it is not the ultimate answer to man's spiritual problems.

3. Can greater sensual pleasure help? No one opposes good fun but in this age "King Jazz has replaced King Jesus." In the gusto generation there is more enthusiasm for beer, wine, whiskey and drugs than for God, Christ, the church and the Bible. No wonder the suicide rate is so high!

The greatest need of the world is **salvation from sin**. If

that need is filled, then nothing else matters. All have sinned (Romans 3:23) and newness of life is described by Paul in Romans 6:1-4.

The Kind of Church the World Likes

The world and the church have always been “at odds” but there is a church the world likes:

1. A church that has an honorable reputation (Revelation 3:1).
2. A church untroubled by inward heresy, or outward opposition (Galatians 2:4,5).
3. A church well spoken of by outsiders (Luke 6:26).
4. A church that winks at moral evils in the community viz. gambling, drinking, drugs, etc. The church that “rolls over and plays dead” to the world’s demands is dead in God’s sight (Revelation 3:1,2).
5. A church that pulls punches in preaching the word (2 Timothy 4:1-4).
6. A church whose members live like those in the world (2 Corinthians 6:17,18).
7. A church that doesn’t practice discipline and withdrawal of fellowship from the disorderly (1 Corinthians 5:1-13).
8. A church that compromises the truth for fear of offending sinners (Mark 16:15-16; Galatians 3:26,27). Jesus said “*Upon this rock will I build my church*” (Matthew 16:18). “*The churches of Christ salute you*” (Romans 16:16).

What Men Live By

Jesus said *“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”* (Matthew 4:4).

Men live by bread, but not bread alone. They are outwardly happy if they have “things,” completely dejected if they do not. The rich man in Luke 12:16-21 was so concerned about “things” that he forgot the Great Giver of those things. Though bread may be the “staff of life” Christ is the “bread of life” (John 6:35). Man is to be sustained by every word of God. Every word of the Bible is important to us. Who dares delete any of it? Bible words about love (1 Corinthians 13); service (Matthew 20:28); obedience (Hebrews 5:8,9; Acts 22:16); and purity (Galatians 5:19-23) will never cease to have uplifting value to those who have learned to live with God and regulate their lives by sacred teachings. Those who view “bread alone” as the chief purpose in life can easily lose the very things that make life worthwhile.

An Atheist Denies That Which the Devil Admits

The Bible says, "*The devils also believe, and tremble*" (James 2:19) yet an atheist will not go that far. He doesn't believe, period! What are the grounds of disbelief? Some say...

1. "I don't believe in God because I can't see Him." But we believe in other things we can't see, namely love, hate, electricity, etc.

2. "God's existence can't be proven by the scientists." Perhaps scientists don't have big enough laboratories and test tubes! Don't limit God to the measure of our own ideas. The Lord said, "*Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself*" (Psalm 50:21).

3. "I can't understand all about God." But the man who believes only what he can understand must either have an enormously large brain or a very small creed. God has given, in the Bible, the specific information we need to know about Him and our responsibilities (Acts 17:22-31; 22:16; Romans 12).

An appeal to the world itself helps us to see the evidence of God. Can there be a work of art without an artist? A design without a designer? An effect without a cause? God's wisdom and power are displayed in nature so that only "*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God*"

(Psalm 14:1). Just as sure as a house has a builder, so the universe has a maker (Hebrews 3:4).

The certainty of God's existence is not at all affected by persistent denials of Him. Our God, He is alive!

SOS

Man has been created by God as a free moral agent. All mankind must make the supreme choice in life of **sin or salvation**. Sin is the way that walks contrary to the will of heaven. In the Bible, sin is likened to filth and vomit (2 Peter 2:20-22); dirty clothes (Revelation 3:4); a diseased body (Isaiah 1:6). The Bible says "*whatsoever is not of faith is sin*" (Romans 14:23). Since faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17), a life of sin stands opposed to Holy Scripture.

Salvation is the alternative to sin. Salvation is great (Hebrews 2:1), and comes only through Christ (Acts 4:12). Salvation is "*by grace through faith*" (Ephesians 2:8,9). Man accepts (not merits) salvation by obeying God's commands of faith, repentance, confession and immersion in water for the remission of sins (Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:38; 8:37).

Salvation brings freedom from the guilt, practice and presence of sin. None has fallen so low that they cannot be redeemed (1 Timothy 1:15,16); and no one lives so well that they can do without the completeness of Christ's salvation (Colossians 2:10).

God's Color Line

The Bible teaches that God *"hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth..."* (Acts 17:26). Through the years, man has drawn racial distinctions of black, white, yellow, red, etc. Racial prejudice was sinful in the life of Simon Peter, whom Paul, a fellow apostle, withstood to the face (Galatians 2:11:13).

In Acts 10:34,35 we read that *"God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him."* God's color line is "scarlet" for in Isaiah 1:18 the Lord says, *"though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."* God's color line is the color of **sin**, not **skin**!

All men can be one in Christ by obeying the gospel. Sinners must repent, confess and be baptized and then they can stand on the common ground of salvation in Christ (Acts 17:30,31; Romans 10:9,10; Acts 22:16; 2 Timothy 2:10).

Scarlet Fever

Recently our youngest son came down with scarlet fever, which the doctor said is “making the rounds.” Hopefully, with proper medical care, “this too shall pass” with little damage done. There is another “scarlet fever,” however, that is much more dangerous. The prophet Isaiah (750 B.C.) spoke God’s mind and said, “*Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool*” (Isaiah 1:18). Sin is the worst strain of “scarlet fever” ever known.

1. It effects the soul, not just the body (Ezekial 18:20).
2. It is lethal unless treated in time (Romans 6:23).
3. Being the contradiction of everything God is, it elicits God’s wrath and displeasure. The first great epidemic of this fever resulted in the extermination of the world except eight (8) precious souls (Genesis 6:10; 1 Peter 3:18-21). Sodom and Gomorrah had the disease in a “queer” way and paid the price for impenitent perversity (Genesis 18,19).
4. Scarlet sin had broken out again in Christ’s day (Matthew 7:15; 23:1-39).

Today the fever is loose again. The unusual thing is that it can be sold in bottles and cans in liquor stores; easily viewed on TV screens; found in man-made religious groups with their multiplied false teachings; or otherwise dispensed

in ten thousand ways. Sin is the calamity no one escapes (Romans 3:23). God's will was that the Great Physician come and bring the cure (Matthew 9:13). The divine prescription is faith (John 8:24); repentance (Luke 13:3,5); confession (Matthew 10:32,33); baptism (Mark 16:15,16); and faithful Christian living (Revelation 2:10). Will you be killed or cured by this scarlet fever?

The Living Word for Dying Men

No thought is more significant than that men are dying creatures. David said in 1 Chronicles 29:15, *“our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.”* Job said that man *“cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not”* (Job 14:2). The best statement a man can make, at any time, regarding his stay on the earth is to say *“there is but a step between me and death”* (1 Samuel 20:3). Can you say for sure that you will be alive next year? next month? next day? hour? minute? If you don't know the future, isn't it about time you became better acquainted with the God of the future? The Living God has given His Living Word to a dying humanity. Philippians 2:16 calls it the *“word of life.”* Hebrews 4:12 says that the word of God is *“quick (living) and active and sharper than any two-edged sword.”*

This old world is one of ultimate winding down. The metal rusts; the wood rots; the flesh decays; but there is an incorruptible substance called the *“Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever”* (1 Peter 1:23). Wouldn't it serve your best interest to exercise a greater awareness about the contents of that word? 1 Peter 2:2 admonishes *“desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may be able to grow thereby.”* The Christians of Berea were said to be *“more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched*

the scriptures daily” (Acts 17:11). The Bible is the means by which you can achieve speaking terms with God as James 1:18 teaches: “*of his own will begat he us with the word of truth...*” The Bible commands all men to repent (Acts 17:30,31) and every creature to be baptized (Mark 16:15,16). The shame of our day is that so many are found to be ignorant of the imperishable Book of the Ages. To be ignorant of God’s Word is no sin—but staying that way is! If you’re going to change for the better, then do it now—your time may be about up!

Does It Matter What You Believe?

A strange statement often overheard is “Well, it doesn’t make any difference what you believe...” Is this statement an accurate reflection of the will of God, or is it man’s wishful thinking? Is the statement designed to please men or please God? The Bible, God’s will for man in this age, teaches what you believe does make a difference.

1. It matters if we believe in God. Hebrews 11:6, “*He that cometh to God must believe that he is...*”

2. It matters if we believe in Christ. Jesus said in John 8:24, “*Except ye believe I am He, ye shall die in your sins.*”

3. It matters if we believe false prophets and teachers. John, the apostle of love, said, “*believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God*” (1 John 4:1). Peter wrote “*There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies*” (2 Peter 2:1).

4. It matters if we believe the truth. 2 Thessalonians 2:12 says, “*That they all might be damned who believed not the truth...*” The truth is God’s word (John 17:17).

The negative which says, “What we believe doesn’t matter” discourages research, stifles investigation and puts a premium on ignorance. Unless error is the same as truth; up the same as down; and yes the same as no, then it does matter what we believe. The Bible says Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). The

Lord commands His gospel to be preached to every creature under heaven and *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned”* (Mark 16:15,16). Reader, think carefully, if it doesn't matter what you believe — then it doesn't matter if you believe!

Who Cares?

David once lamented, “*no man cared for my soul*” (Psalm 142:4). Have you ever felt that way? Do you think anyone really cares? There are those who are greatly concerned about you.

1. Christians care. The Bible says we are “*to do good unto all men*” (Galatians 6:10). To love our fellow man with an eye to being a good neighbor is an ideal much needed in a day when loneliness is the great problem of many (Matthew 22:32-39; Luke 10:29-37).

2. Preachers especially care! Paul said that Timothy cared for others (Philippians 2:20). Paul himself was a caring preacher of tender sympathies (1 Thessalonians 2:7,8).

3. God cares most of all! With unbounded love He sent His Son to die for you (John 3:16; Romans 5:8). 1 Peter 5:7 says, “*he careth for you.*”

Maybe the real question isn't “who cares?” but “Do you care?” The best way to exercise care for your eternal well-being is to trust and obey God (Acts 16:30-34). Today, be thankful that God and His people care.

How The Devil Works

The worst enemy of man is Satan. His goals are wicked; his ways evil. In the Bible the devil is called “a roaring lion” (1 Peter 5:8), and “that old serpent” (Revelation 20:2). Do we know how he works? The Bible says he works by:

1. Telling lies (John 8:44). Satan told Adam and Eve, regarding the forbidden fruit, “*Ye shall not surely die*” (Genesis 3:4). An example of Satan’s lies today is, “*He that believeth and is not baptized shall be saved.*” The Lord said, “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*” (Mark 16:15,16).

2. Perverting the scriptures. In Matthew 4 Satan took a passage out of context, thus twisting its meaning.

3. Organizing his churches. Not all religious groups are approved of God. Revelation 3:9 speaks condemningly of “*the synagogue of Satan.*”

4. Thwarting God’s purposes (1 Thessalonians 2:18).

5. Appearing as “*an angel of light*” (2 Corinthians 11:14). Good appearance can be deceiving. Religious cranks, denominationalists, cults and charlatans fool many with their errors.

Beware of the workings of Satan!

The Rock That Never Rolls

Psalm 40:1,2 says *“he set my feet upon a rock and established my goings.”* Amidst the sinking sands of skepticism and worldly philosophies there is the solid ground of God’s never changing word (Matthew 24:35).

Men say the Bible is inadequate and erroneous but they speak with more persuasion in mind than accuracy. The Bible remains the foremost book of law and wisdom. At best men can only create doubt about the Eternal Volume. It is far beyond the power of any man or group of men to prove the Bible to be anything less than the true word of God. Men are not asked to blindly accept the Bible but to be fair-minded and open to the many evidences which support its genuineness.

The statements of scientific foreknowledge are significant:

1. The Bible tells of the earth being suspended freely in space hundreds of years before modern astronomy discovered it. See Job 26:7.

2. Genesis 9:4 discloses that the “blood is the life.” Yet, scientific thought for years taught bleeding (blood-letting) as a cure.

How did these ancient Bible writers know in advance these scientific truths before their discovery? Reader, isn’t it time you made an in-depth study of the evidences for the Bible? Read the Book to be wise and obey it to be saved (Romans 6:1-4; 16-18).

People Can Change

It is sometimes said of those in sin, "They will never change." While it is true that sin can have a death grip on men, yet it is possible if man's heart be willing, to make a change in his way of living. Jesus Christ introduced into the world the greatest power to change men the world has ever known. That power is the gospel (Romans 1:16).

An elderly man spent years of vanity in the nothingness of ungodly living and looking back with tear-filled eyes over the mountains of heartaches and acres of regrets cried, "I'm so tired of sin. Can someone help me?" A drunkard became disgusted with himself and said "I want to change." He did. You can.

People can change. Peter changed from a coward into an intrepid proclaimer of God's word (Matthew 26:74; Acts 2:1-42). An up and coming young Pharisee named Saul first persecuted the church but he changed and began "*preaching the faith which once he destroyed*" (Galatians 1:23). What great hope the gospel brings!

Do you need to make a change? The change begins in obedience to the gospel (Galatians 3:26-27).

Heart Religion

Since only a religion of the heart has value, let us see what the Bible includes as part of heart religion. According to the Holy Scriptures heart religion is:

1. **Heart-felt.** With the heart man loves (Matthew 22:37) and desires (Romans 10:1). Good feelings by themselves are not an indication that one is right with God but if one is right with God good feelings will result. Rejoicing (a feeling) comes after obedience (Acts 8:36-39). In religion we feel good because we are right, but we are not right with God just because we feel good.

2. **Heart-thought.** The heart thinks (Proverbs 23:7); understands (Matthew 13:15) and believes (Romans 10:10). True Christianity involves the intellect.

3. **Heart-acted.** True heart religion results in obedience to God's commands (Romans 6:16,17). This includes baptism into Christ (Romans 6:4).

There is a great difference in heart religion and "holler" religion. Is your religion from the heart?

Father Knows Best

Ephesians 4:6 tells us of *“one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”* By right of creation all men stand under the Fatherhood of God (Acts 17:24-29); but by right of conversion, only those who are Christians can call God, *“Our Father”* (1 John 3:1). As our heavenly Father, God:

1. **Provides for His children.** The blessings of providence are ever with us (Matthew 6:33; Romans 8:28). Spiritual provision (forgiveness of sins) has also been made (Ephesians 1:10).

2. **Punishes or Disciplines His Household.** Earthly fathers have the right to administer discipline (Hebrews 12:2-12) and restrain children from wayward paths. The Heavenly Father does, too!

3. **Hates sin.** Romans 1:18 says: *“the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men...”*

4. **Loves Sinners.** Romans 5:8 teaches *“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”*

5. **Invites All to Come to Him.** Revelation 22:17 says, *“And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”*

Those who come to God through Christ by obeying the

gospel are in God's family (Romans 5:1; 6:1-4, 16-18). Since the church is God's family (1 Timothy 3:15), none of His children are outside the church. Is God your spiritual Father?

The Bible Is

The Bible is a telescope to see timeless truths. The truths about the origin of life (Genesis 1:1); the purpose of life (Ecclesiastes 12:13); and the destiny of the soul (Matthew 25:46) are alike given.

The Bible is a microscope to behold divine messages. The message is: to believe (Hebrews 11:6); to repent of wickedness and evil ways (Acts 17:30,31); to confess Christ (Romans 10:9,10); to be baptized in order that sins be washed away (Acts 22:16); to live a godly life (Titus 2:11,12). The message will never change.

The Bible is a doorway to great wisdom, riches and power. The gospel, as God gave it, is what people of all the ages need. The Book of God tells of great "riches" (Ephesians 3:8); and the wisdom of righteous living (Hebrews 9:27; 2 Timothy 4:8); as well as the power of God to change our lives (Romans 1:16; Hebrews 4:12). In the word of God men and women see clearly their hopeless condition apart from Christ (Ephesians 2:12) or their blest condition with Christ (Romans 8:1).

The doctrines and teachings of men can never substitute for the Bible as it reveals heavenly truths, divine messages, and spiritual blessings (Mark 7:7; Galatians 3:26,27).

The Sure Foundation

All men are building their lives on one of two foundations: the sand or the rock.

A life established on the sands of popularity can be overturned by whims of human fickleness. To be right with God is better than to be popular with men (Exodus 23:2; Matthew 7:13,14).

A life built on the sands of materialism can crumble in the hour of financial reverses or adversity (1 Timothy 6:6-11). Only empty loneliness will remain.

A life built on the sands of worldly pleasures and lusts can fall to the powerful winds of wasting illness, disease and guilt (2 Timothy 2:22; 1 John 2:15-17). Mental anguish and misery are left.

A life built on the Lord Jesus Christ can endure and withstand every terrible tempest of this life. A life lived "in Christ" (Romans 5:1; 6:1-4; 8:1; 1 Corinthians 3:10,11) will last into the eternal ages. Friend, build your life on the sure foundation.

The Divine Word Verses A Deceived World

The Bible teaches that men can be deceived by Satan (Revelation 12:9,10). Deception in vital matters pertaining to the soul means damnation.

The religious world is deceived if it believes that God approves of religious division (denominationalism). The Divine Word teaches such division is sinful (1 Corinthians 1:10-13; John 17:20,21; Ephesians 4:1-4).

The world is deceived if it believes that the purpose of the church is to serve merely as a "food, fun and frolic" center. While it is true that joy and gladness are characteristics of the Christian's life, yet the purpose of the church is to preach the gospel to all the world. The church is "*the pillar and ground of the truth*" (1 Timothy 3:15), not the playground of the world. Much study, suffering and sacrifice will be required to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation (Romans 12:1,2; 2 Timothy 2:2,3).

The world is deceived if it believes salvation is by faith alone. The Bible says men are saved "*not by faith only*" (James 2:24).

The world is deceived if it believes "once saved, always saved" is a true doctrine. To the contrary, "*he that endureth to the end shall be saved*" (Matthew 10:22).

If God Loved You As Much As You Love Him, Where Would You Be?

The love of God is a subject which cannot be measured. The Bible teaches heaven's love for all men. In Ephesians 5:1,2 we read, "...*Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice...*" See also John 3:16. It has been said, "The strongest of all motives that can change a person's life is the love of God."

But God's love alone is not enough. Paul said "*The love of Christ constraineth us*" (2 Corinthians 5:14). Men must respond to the love from on high and reflect their love in good works. "*We love, because He first loved us*" (1 John 4:19).

Because God's love was so great that "*Christ died for us*" we should obey the Lord's will in all things (Romans 5:8; John 14:15). Because they loved God, the Corinthians heard, believed, and were baptized (Acts 18:8; 1 Corinthians 13).

Do you truly love God? Will you obey the will of God?

There are Multitudes Whose Bibles Are Read Only On The Edges

Bible reading, though discouraged by some, is a wonderful privilege as well as an essential for Christian living (Acts 17:11). Being greater than any product of purely human genius, the Bible cannot but be a benefit to man.

In studying the Scriptures man receives lasting blessings:

1. **Strength.** Who doesn't need greater strength for the heavy loads of life? Proverbs 24:5 says "*a man of knowledge increaseth strength.*"

2. **Happiness.** The common objective of human beings is to be happy. The Bible must be central in the search for happiness for success to be realized. Psalm 1:1,2 says the blessed (happy) man has "*his delight in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.*"

3. **The approval of God.** (2 Timothy 2:15). No higher goal in life is there than to seek God's favor.

Patrick Henry, near death, said "Here is a book, the Bible, worth more than all others that were ever printed; yet it is my misfortune never to have found time to read it."

Reader, apply yourself to the Scriptures and then apply the Scriptures to your life (Galatians 3:26,27).

Booze Befuddles Brains

Every 60 seconds over \$20,000 is spent on liquor in the U.S. It causes right-minded people to shudder with horror to see so many drinking that which destroys the brain, decays the body, and damns the soul. The Bible says, *“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise”* (Proverbs 20:1). The seriousness of drinking is further seen in Paul’s frank language in Galatians 5:21, *“Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”*

Although the financial cost of alcohol is high, yet its real cost is to be measured in terms of broken homes, wrecked lives, ruined careers and lost souls. However, the power of the gospel can enable even the drunkard to live a godly life (Romans 1:16; 12:1,2). “King Corn” can be overcome by King James (Galatians 3:26,27). Don’t be deceived by alcohol’s allurements.

Don't Be Fooled

The world is full of unwise ones who ignore warnings about dangers yet unseen. Of all warnings in the world, Bible warnings are the most necessary. Certain essential and unalterable lessons are taught concerning the hazards of being fooled:

1. **Don't be fooled about God.** Paul wrote, "*be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth; that shall he also reap*" (Galatians 6:7). A person cannot turn their nose up at God, ignore Him, slight Him, and expect to approach the Judgment Day unafraid.

2. **Don't be fooled about life.** "*Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*" You can't talk cream and live skim milk. Are you living a godly life? God's call for purity is "*come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord...*" (2 Corinthians 6:17). We must live "*soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*" (Titus 2:11,12). Light and darkness were meant to be separate. Is your manner of living trying to blend the two? The wise will sow the seeds of a pure life and shall reap life everlasting.

3. **Don't be fooled about sin.** The world says sin isn't sin any more. Drunkards are simply people making adjustments to life; liars are "verbal extroverts"; and adultery is viewed as an "affair." But God's words say all drunkards, liars and adulterers are going to hell (Galatians 5:19-21;

Revelation 21:8), except they repent. Sin is transgression of the law (1 John 3:4); a neglect to do the right (James 5:17). Don't be fooled! Poison is still poison even if the label reads "sugar."

4. **Don't be fooled about salvation.** Some say you can't get it; others, forget it. The Bible says the way of salvation has been delivered unto men (Titus 2:11,12) and men must repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21) and then live faithfully until death in the service of God (Revelation 2:10).

Those who care not for God, mind not how they live, repent not of sin, cannot be saved. Don't be fooled!

Win, Lose, Draw

Christ came to earth to **win** souls. The Saviour's mission was to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). The soul of man is valued above all of earth's riches (Matthew 16:24-26). Followers of Christ are still seeking to win souls in Christ's name (Proverbs 11:30).

He would win souls by **losing** His life. Forsaken by man and God, Christ died at Calvary. He gave His life as a ransom for many (Matthew 26:28). Hebrews 2:9 says that Christ tasted death for every man. His blood was shed for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2).

By losing His life He would **draw** all men to Him. In the wilderness, Moses lifted up the serpent and so must the Son of God be lifted up (John 3:14; 12:32). The gospel of the uplifted Christ is the greatest drawing power in all the world. Men drawn without distinction as black, white, male, female, old, young, etc. are invited to learn of Christ (Matthew 11:28-30). All thinking persons should be touched by the story of Calvary's love. He came to win. He won by losing. In losing He draws. Obey the gospel by hearing, believing and being baptized (Acts 18:8).

Selling the Soul

We live in a world filled with a passion for material things. It is hard to convince a materialistically minded person that they have an eternal soul. The soul cannot be seen with physical eyes nor examined in a test tube, therefore, many deny it even exists.

Although it is unseen, the soul of man is beyond price. Jesus said, *“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”* (Matthew 10:26). Despite the tremendous value of the soul, the Devil is buying souls today at bargain prices. Some sell their souls for:

1. Wealth (Luke 12:16-21): Judas betrayed the Lord for 30 pieces of silver.

2. Worldly pleasures (1 John 2:15-17): Adam and Eve sold out for a taste of forbidden fruit (Genesis 3).

3. Fame, popularity and praise: The Jews *“loved the praise of men more than the praise of God”* (John 12:42,43). Will you stand on the ground of truth when it is unpopular to do so?

The soul of man is not to be bartered. It is, however, to be purified by obeying the truth (1 Peter 1:22,23). Save your soul by serving the Christ (Acts 2:37-40).

Is God A Lawyer?

“Some people treat God like they do a lawyer; they go to Him only when they are in trouble.”

The above statement contains more truth than fiction. It is good to go to God in time of trouble as Psalm 46:1 says, “*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble.*” But are there other times God wants us to come to Him?

1. **In time of youth.** Ecclesiastes 12:1. Obedience to God’s will brings true joy regardless of age.

2. **In time of doubts.** Skeptical Thomas came to be of strong faith by examining the evidence for Christ’s resurrection. He exclaimed “*My Lord and my God*” (John 20:24-29).

3. **In time of prosperity and ease.** If things are bad and Christ says “*come unto me*” (Matthew 11:28-30), how much more needed is He when times are good!

4. **In time of sin.** It does no good for us to make up our own rules for dealing with sin as only the applied blood of Christ can remove iniquity (Ephesians 1:7; Romans 6:3,4) and give the right answer to man’s supreme problem.

5. **In time of death.** Walking with God through life makes easier the walk through “*the valley of the shadow of death*” (Psalm 23:4).

We cannot name a bad time to come to the Lord. When will you seek him?

The Distance from Earth to Heaven Is not so Much a Matter of Altitude as it Is a Matter of Attitude

Sins of disposition (attitude) are of great concern to God. In Romans 1:29-31 are catalogued 23 sins of the world and 13 are sins of disposition. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 also puts the emphasis on attitude or disposition; in Galatians 5:19-21 will be found 17 sins listed, many of which deal with our attitudes.

What is your attitude toward the Bible? Do you realize it is a book exalted above all others? Is it your guide through life? How can anyone settle the perplexing questions of life unless they go to the Word of God? To study the Bible will multiply your joys and divide your sorrows. Will you study with us?

Keep The Change

People can change their lives from sin to salvation. The energy to change is the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16). While a change in a sinner's life (conversion) is necessary, still God expects the change to be kept! A question that has prompted much discussion is "Can a child of God cease to be a child of God?" Is it true "Once saved, always saved?" Please notice the teaching of Scriptures on the possibility of falling:

1. One can deny the faith (1 Timothy 5:8).
2. One can depart from the faith (1 Timothy 4:1).
3. One can make shipwreck of the faith (1 Timothy 1:19,20).
4. Jesus said some could "*for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away*" (Luke 8:13).
5. Paul warned the Galatians of the danger of being "*fallen from grace*" (Galatians 5:4). Why speak such if it's not possible to fall?

Regardless of the degree of wickedness one is in, Christ can "*save to the uttermost*" (Hebrews 7:25). If we are in sin, it is important to change. It is just as important to keep the change! (Acts 22:16).

Man's Greatest Journey

Man loves to travel. The journeys of man have taken him from pole to pole, and from ocean's bottom to the top of the skies...and beyond! Wherever man goes (and for whatever the reason) man cannot escape what he is. Our character sticks closer than a shadow.

Spiritually, man is a traveler also. The heart of man often wanders far from God. Jesus said, "*This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me*" (Matthew 15:8). The most dangerous journey of man is the journey away from God into the far country of sin. The prodigal son traveled this road (Luke 16:11-32) but after the thrills of sin subsided, "*he came to himself*" and resolved to return to his father's house. If we see sin for what it really is and resolve to obey the will of the Father we can come to ourselves! That's man's greatest journey.

The Bible teaches that we must hear, believe and be baptized to be saved (Acts 18:8). It teaches we can fall from grace also (Galatians 5:4). Are you in need of taking man's greatest journey?

What Is In It For Me?

To obey the gospel of Christ is to answer the world's greatest challenge — to live the Christian life. The Bible teaches that through faith one has “*power to become*” a follower of Christ (John 1:12). By being baptized (immersed in water) one is put “*into Christ*” (Galatians 3:26,27). Newness of life follows and the Christian adventure begins (Romans 6:3,4).

What is there “in Christ” to cause us to want to obey the gospel?

There is:

1. Release from the guilt and practice of sin (2 Corinthians 5:17).

2. The privilege of prayer (John 15:7; 1 Peter 3:12).

3. God's providential (special) care (1 Corinthians 10:13; Romans 8:28).

4. A new name to wear (Acts 11:26).

5. A new outlook on life (Philippians 1:20,21).

6. New duties (Titus 2:11,12). We are saved to serve (Matthew 20:26-28).

7. A new reward (Revelation 2:10). In eternity, your home in heaven will be more precious than all earth's glamour and gold (John 14:1-3).

8. In summary, “all spiritual blessings” are in Christ! (Ephesians 1:3). Consider what you now have in the world. Is it worth it? If not, then consider Christ!

Losing Our Senses

When unusual behavior is observed in another, someone may say, "They have lost their senses." It seems proper, based on certain observations, to say that many people today seem to have lost their senses! Some have lost their:

1. **Sense of God.** More and more a practical atheism is gaining ground (Titus 1:16). People admit they believe in God, but act as if He did not exist. Like God's people of old, they have "*pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears*" (Zechariah 7:11).

2. **Sense of sin.** Sin isn't sin anymore! It has changed to "a mistake," "maladjustment", "sickness," etc. One writer pointed out that since Eisenhower, 1953, no President has used the word "sin" in addressing our national problems!

3. **Sense of Shame.** In Jeremiah's day the ability to blush had been lost. "*Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush...*" (Jeremiah 6:15).

Tragically, these losses lead to a greater loss yet, the loss of the soul. Reader, have you lost your senses? Obeying the truth is the sensible thing to do (1 Peter 1:22,23; 3:21).

The Way Of The Lord Is The Will Of The Lord

Jesus said *"I am the way"* (John 14:6). It is said by some that, "The way of salvation is Christ and not baptism, good works, or church membership." But we ask, "Can the person of Christ be separated from the commands of Christ?" Baptism is a command of Christ (Mark 16:15,16); likewise good works are commanded (Ephesians 2:8-10); also church membership is equivalent to being saved (Acts 2:47). Can one really be trusting in Christ as "the way" and deny things "the way" he has said to do? Christ has said *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be condemned"* (Mark 16:15,16). No man in history has ever managed to live a life pleasing to the Lord while turning away his ear from hearing what the Lord has said. All the explaining in the world cannot change the fact that (1) Christ is the way and (2) the Lord's way is expressed in the Lord's will (Matthew 7:21). Reader, will you acknowledge the Lord as the way by doing His will?

How Do You Spell Sin?

“S-E-N,” “C-I-N,” “C-E-N” — no matter how you spell it, sin is sin. It is transgression of God’s will and unrighteousness (1 John 3:4; 5:17). How do you spell sin?

1. You can spell it F-I-L-T-H. 2 Peter 2:22 speaks of those who had returned to sin as *“the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”* To be in sin is bad, to return is worse.

2. You can spell it D-I-R-T. The Lord said to those who hadn’t sinned *“they have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white”* (Revelation 3:4).

3. You can spell it D-I-S-E-A-S-E. The prophets said sin was like a disease and to turn to God was to be healed (Isaiah 53:5; Psalm 41:4).

4. You can spell it B-U-R-D-E-N. David said his sins were *“as a heavy burden”* (Psalm 38:4). Are you stumbling beneath the burden of sin?

5. You can spell it D-A-R-K-N-E-S-S (1 John 1:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:4,5).

6. You can spell it C-A-L-V-A-R-Y for there a Sinless One died as the ransom for sin (2 Corinthians 5:21). The blood of Christ removes sin (1 John 1:7) and as His blood was shed in death *“we must be buried with Him by baptism into death”* (Romans 6:1-4).

Spell it as you will but color it serious. Yet, many scoff at it as a light thing. Sadly, laughter over sin here means sorrow hereafter.

F T L

Much is being said today about praising the Lord. Anyone can shout "Praise the Lord" but true spirituality is manifested when we **follow the Lord** as well.

We need to follow the Lord by leaving sinful denominationalism and become members of the one church He said He would build (Matthew 16:18).

We need to follow the Lord by worshipping God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24) and not according to whims and desires of man. What good is it to praise the Lord in a way He has not commanded? (Matthew 15:8,9).

We need to follow the Lord in preaching the all-sufficient gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth (Mark 16:15,16).

We need to follow the Lord by obeying His simple and essential commandment of faith (John 8:24); repentance (Luke 13:3,5); confession (Matthew 10:32,33); and baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 22:16).

Dear Reader, why not begin today to follow the Lord?

Close Encounters

The Bible tells of some who came close to obeying Christ. These “close encounters” with the Lord warn of the danger of being “almost persuaded” to accept the truth.

The rich young ruler of Mark 10:17-23 had a great interest in discipleship, lacking only “*one thing.*” He came close to full commitment, but finally “*went away grieved.*”

We read of the questioning scribe of Mark 12:28-34. Jesus said of him, “*Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.*”

Felix, the Roman official, heard Paul reason “*of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come*” and trembled at such truths. But he postponed obedience saying, “*When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee*” (Acts 24:25).

Finally, King Agrippa was almost (but not altogether) persuaded to be a Christian. He believed but did not obey (Acts 26:27-29).

Dear Reader, a close encounter is not enough. We must wholly obey the gospel of Christ to be saved (Acts 3:19; 9:6; 22:16).

Religious Leaders On Instrumental Music

“The organ in the worship of God is an insign of Baal”
(Martin Luther, The Lutheran Church.)

“I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also” (1 Corinthians 14;15). “I would as soon pray to God with machinery as to sing to God with machinery” (Charles E. Spurgeon, Baptist).

“I have no objection to the organ in our chapel provided it is neither heard nor see” (John Wesley, Methodist).

“I am an old man, an old minister, and I here declare that I have never known instrumental music to be productive of any good in the worship of God, and have reason to believe that it has been productive of much evil. Music is a science I esteem and admire, but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music, and I here register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of the infinite Spirit who requires His followers to worship Him in spirit and truth” (Adam Clark, Methodist).

The word of God tells us of the instrument God desires to be used in worship. Ephesians 5:19 commands, *“...singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”* The spiritual (not mechanical) instrument is the human

heart. True worshippers (John 4:24) under the New Testament shall be content to worship the Lord the way He desires and set aside their artificial stimulants.

Are We All Headed For The Same Place?

A commonly repeated saying is, "Oh, well, we're all headed for the same place, so what difference does it make what we believe?" But are we all really headed for the same place? The answer is, "Yes, in many respects we are." For instance we are all headed for:

1. **The grave.** Hebrews 9:27 says "*it is appointed unto men once to die.*"

2. **The resurrection.** Paul preached "*that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust*" (Acts 24:15).

3. **The judgment.** In 2 Corinthians 5:10 we are told "*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*"

4. **Eternity.** The concept of eternity is so incomprehensible to the mind of man that the word "eternity" itself is found but one time in all of the Bible (see Isaiah 57:15). However, we are told that one of two possible destinies awaits every soul (Matthew 25:46).

The real question is, "Are we all headed for Heaven?" Jesus gave the answer to this inquiry in Matthew 7:13,14; 21-23. We must obey Christ to be saved (Galatians 3:26,27). The disobedient will be lost.

Love's Labors

The strongest and greatest of all things is love. Jesus said, "*A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another*" (John 13:34). At Corinth, love did not abound for God nor brethren. Thus, the wearing of human names (1 Corinthians 1:12); fornication (5:1); lawsuits among Christians (6:1); misuse of the Lord's Supper (11:20) were some of the things that resulted. Are any of these indications of lovelessness with us today?

Love is evidenced, like faith, by works. Love's labors are listed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8: Love is patient, kind, humble, unselfish, open-minded, truth-centered, optimistic, etc. Love for God and man is as necessary today as in Paul's time. Jesus said, "*If ye love me, keep my commandments*" (John 14:15). If you love the Lord, obey His gospel (Acts 18:8; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Too Many Churches

Jesus promised to build one church (Matthew 16:18). He purchased one church with His blood (Acts 20:28). He is the head of one church (Ephesians 1:22). He is the Saviour of one church (Ephesians 5:25). The church was to be characterized by a visible unity, a unity the world could see (John 17:20,21). To say "One church is as good as another" may reflect current religious thinking and give a favorable impression of broad-mindedness but has no foundation in Bible fact. Should we approve that which the Bible condemns? Paul said, "*For by one spirit are ye all baptized into one body*" (1 Corinthians 12:13). The one body is the church (Colossians 1:18). Therefore we are baptized into the church. Anything more than the one church Jesus established is too much.

Tylenol Truths

A few years ago the icy hand of fear and dismay gripped the American public as from an unknown source, a deadly poison, cyanide, had been put into Tylenol pain relief capsules. People expecting relief from minor pains were suddenly embraced in a major fight for life. Our distress over this situation was matched only by our sympathy for the innocent victims.

Even from tragedies like this it is possible, by comparison, to learn vital lessons:

1. A person can be sincere yet sincerely wrong. The users sincerely thought they were taking a helpful pill, not a harmful poison. One can be misled in religion too! Sincerity does not guarantee infallibility. The Bible says, *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death"* (Proverbs 14:12).

2. The value of an antidote. Cyanide antidote kits were circulated as help to possible victims. What cyanide can do to the body, sin can do to the soul (Romans 6:23). The antidote for sin is the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7). We contact the blood by baptism into Christ's death (Romans 6:1-4).

3. The greater value of the soul. Jesus said, *"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell"* (Matthew 10:28).

Let us learn from all of life's occurrences.

The Man In The Middle

In Luke 23:32-43 we read of three gory crosses standing upward through a storm-clouded sky. On either side were thieves suffering justly for sins they had committed; but the cross in the center bore the sinless Son of God who was dying for the sins of all men (John 1:29; Matthew 20:28).

One thief died in sin but the other became penitent and Christ said, *"Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."* This thief was saved under the law of Moses, before the New Testament (the last will and testament of Christ) came into effect (Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 9:15-17). Under the New Testament, salvation is *"by grace through faith"* (Ephesians 2:8,9). Faith is manifested by works of obedience, including baptism (1 Peter 3:21).

While the world pays much attention to the dying thief saying, "Be saved like the thief" yet, our plea is that of Paul who wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:2, *"For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."* Paul did not say, "the thief and him crucified."

Reader, will you obey the will of the man in the middle who said, *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"* (Mark 16:16).

Are You In The Book?

Instead of telling an acquaintance your telephone number, we frequently say, "Call me, I'm in the book." The meaning is, you can look it up in the telephone directory. But what of the Lamb's Book of Life (Revelation 21:27)? Is your name to be found in that all important book?

It is possible for our names to be blotted out of the Book of Life (Exodus 32:32,33). This argues against the doctrine of "once saved, always saved." Since those who have been saved have their names in the Lamb's Book, to get your name there, you must be "*in Christ*" (2 Timothy 2:10). You must obey the Lord's commands to be saved (Hebrews 5:8,9; Galatians 3:26,27). Afterwards, you can rejoice (Acts 2:38; 16:40).

Are you in the book?

Anything Is Wrong That Is Almost Right

Men's choices in religion are limited to two: the right way or the wrong (Joshua 24:15; Matthew 12:30). But what about the "gray area" of being almost right?

1. Is it acceptable to be almost right in worship to God? In Leviticus 10:1,2 Nadab and Abihu presented an offering unto God of "*strange fire.*" This act of worship was almost what God commanded but the offering was rejected and Nadab and Abihu lost their lives. Why? Because anything is wrong that is almost right. Worship must be exactly according to truth (John 4:24; 17:17; Hebrews 8:5).

2. Is it acceptable to be almost right in salvation? Saul of Tarsus was honest and sincere in the practice of his religious convictions (Acts 23:1). He was also zealous in keeping the law of Moses but being almost right left Saul entirely lost! He was later told to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins (Acts 22:16).

3. Is it acceptable to be almost right in doctrine? Paul the apostle, in effect, said Hymenaeus and Philetus were almost right in teaching the resurrection of the dead but to teach it was "past already" was erring from the truth and overthrowing the faith (2 Timothy 2:17,18). Hymenaeus and Philetus were almost right but wrong!

4. Is it acceptable to be almost right about the church? Jesus died for the church He came to establish (Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28). Acts 2:47 says the saved were added to “the church.” Whose church? John the Baptist’s church? Martin Luther’s church?

Just to be called a “church” and do some things the Bible commands is to be almost right! Anything is wrong that is almost right. How important for men to be altogether right in religion.

Thy Kingdom Has Come

In Matthew 6:9-13 Jesus answered a request of His disciples and gave what today is commonly called, "The Lord's Prayer." A portion of this prayer says "*thy kingdom come.*"

The kingdom did come within the lifetime of Jesus' contemporaries (Mark 9:1). Specifically, in fulfillment of prophesy, it came on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection from the dead (Acts 2). Entrance into the kingdom was based on repentance and baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

Today, it would be inappropriate to pray "thy kingdom come" because it has already come. Paul told the Colossians that they had been delivered from darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Colossians 1:13). The kingdom had to exist for them to be translated into it.

In Hebrews 12:28, we read that the kingdom had already been received by first century Christians.

"Thy kingdom come" was an appropriate expression in the days prior to Acts 2, but, today there is neither precept nor example for praying such. Reader, are you in the kingdom?

God And Green Dollars

Many options are available for modern man in choosing a way of life. Some say, "Money is all that matters" and wealth is viewed as a magic carpet to carry people to the far away land of happiness.

Yet, in Jesus' parable in Luke 12, a certain rich man thought that with enough money he "had it made." However, he forgot the salvation of his soul and while stock-piling wealth, he lost the most precious thing of all. While "things" are visibly impressive, materialism alone fails to give a satisfying reason for living and renders, at best, only a superficial answer to man's colossal inner problems. Modern clothes may be finer, but for many, character is shabbier.

In our world of perils and perplexities we need to be sustained by "*every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*" (Matthew 4:4). Fully believed and dynamically lived, New Testament Christianity offers to the world the surest way to happiness and security. Why not become a Christian today? Read Galatians 3:26,27.

Saved By Grace Through Faith

It is common today to hear religious voices say, “we are saved by grace through faith and that eliminates baptism.” The Bible does teach in Ephesians 2:8-10 that *“by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained we should walk in them.”*

But does Ephesians 2:8-10 rule out being baptized as a condition of salvation? What kind of works did Paul have in mind when he said “not of works”? Paul meant works of man’s devising, not such works as God demands. John 6:29 says that belief is also a work but it is a work commanded by Christ. Baptism in water for the remission of sins is also Christ-commanded (Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:38).

Paul told the Ephesians that they were saved by grace through faith, yet the Ephesians had been baptized according to Acts 19:1-6. Have you been saved by grace through faith the way the Ephesians were?

God's Word Is The Last Word

The Word of God, unaided by human creeds, is the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice for the Christian (2 Timothy 3:15-17). Consequently, God's Word is the last word on all matters that pertain to man's eternal salvation.

God's Word is the last word on the church. Jesus built but one church (Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 12:20). The church is essential because the saved are added to it (Acts 2:47).

God's Word is the last word on salvation from sin. The scriptures teach that faith, repentance and baptism are unto the remission of sins (Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:38).

God's Word is the last word on right living. Many things are legally right but morally wrong. The Bible says we are to live "*soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*" (Titus 2:12).

Reader, to whose word do you listen?

Keep Right

The world's shortest sermon is seen on thousands of traffic signs — "KEEP RIGHT." Are you keeping right? The word of God commands us to:

1. **Live the right life.** This includes a life separated from unclean things (2 Corinthians 6:17). It means living "*soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world*" (Titus 2:12). We begin a new life by being born again (John 3:1-5; Mark 16:15,16).

2. **Speak the right words.** Ephesians 4:29 says "*Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth...*" Filthy words mean a filthy soul and bankrupt vocabulary.

3. **Think the right thoughts.** Proverbs 23:7 says, "*For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...*" Philippians 4:8 tells us that "*whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*"

4. **Believe the right doctrine.** The Lord "*hates every false way*" (Psalm 119:104). Perverted doctrines are to be forsaken, not embraced (Ephesians 5:11; 2 John 9-11; Galatians 1:6-9).

The right way is not always shortest nor smoothest but it is always safest and best.

Fool's Gold

Iron Pyrite is the chemical compound that has deceived many weary prospectors. Better known as “fool’s gold” — some found it and thought they had found real gold. They were sadly disappointed. Are you hunting for the truly valuable things in life? Don’t be led astray by “fool’s gold.”

Love of money is Fool’s Gold. Jesus told of the danger of our lives being rich in goods but not rich in God (Luke 12:15-21). The deceitfulness of riches still fools many (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

New morality (Sexual Freedom) is Fool’s Gold. The new morality has led many to lose control of their lives through unwanted children, forced marriages, drug and alcohol addiction, etc. Worldliness is a loss of freedom! But even though one is a slave of sin, he can be “*made free from sin*” (Romans 6:16-18).

Unscriptural divorce is Fool’s Gold. Divorce is an admission of failure. The practical application of Bible principles can save your marriage and your soul (Ephesians 5:21-32).

Believing that a love of money, sexual looseness, divorce, etc. will make us better, freer, or happier is an illusion. To get these things is to get “fool’s gold.” To give your life lasting value or meaning attach it to a cause greater than life itself (Matthew 10:32,33; 28:18-20).

Get Lost

One of the most frightening words in the English language is **lost**. Any school child can spell it; and most adults at some time or other have known the terror of it. It is sad to hear of someone who has “lost their health,” “lost their wealth,” etc. The greatest of all losses is the loss of the soul.

One can have a good conscience and be lost. The conscience of man has never been infallible but often leads people astray. It can happen in matters of health, business, or even in marriage. It can happen in religion, too! God requires more of us than to merely think within ourselves that we are religiously right. Saul of Tarsus was required to obey the gospel of Christ, in addition to having a good conscience (Acts 23:1; 22:16).

One can believe and still be lost. Agrippa was said to believe but he was not a Christian at the point of faith alone (Acts 26:27,28). Faith must be followed by works to be saving faith (James 2:24).

One can be saved and later fall from grace and become lost. Most of the New Testament was written for the purpose of encouraging Christians to continue steadfastly. Why all the warnings, if the possibility of falling does not exist? (2 Peter 2:20-22; 3:17; 2 Corinthians 10:12; 1 Timothy 1:18,19).

Reader, we hope you will be saved...not lost.