



A GUIDE TO CHRISTIAN WORKERS

table of contents

- I. COMMISSION
- II. COMPASSION
- III. CONCERN
- IV. CONTACT
- V. CONVERSATION
- VI. CONVERSION
- VII. CONVINCEMENT
- VIII. CAMOUFLAGE
- IX. CHRIST
- X. CONDENSATION

I. COMMISSION

Give us a watchword for the hour,
A thrilling word, a word of power;
A battle cry, a flaming breath,
A call to conquest or to death;
A word to rouse the church from rest,
To heed the Master's high behest.
The call is given, ye hosts arise,
The watchword is EVANGELIZE!
To fallen men, a dying race,
Make known the gift of gospel grace.
The world that now in darkness lies,
O Church of Christ, EVANGELIZE!

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:18-20).

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

"O son of man, I have set thee a watchman . . . therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me . . . if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand" (Ezekiel 33:7-8).

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:13-16).

II. COMPASSION

The story is told that Martinelli received \$25,000 for singing only twice. Paul and Silas sang one night in a prison. Their song was not rendered with the skill or harmony of that of Martinelli's, but its tenderness touched the heart of the keeper of the prison and echoed through the angel-crowded streets of heaven; and the listening King of kings rewarded those who sang with crowns of glory that will gleam in beauty throughout eternal ages.

* * * *

An immortal soul is beyond all price.

There is no trouble too great, no humiliation too deep, no suffering too severe, no love too strong, no labor too hard, no expense too large, but that it is worth it, if it is spent in the effort to win a soul.

God loves the soul more than all creation. He fashioned it after His own image, and made it like unto Himself. Every soul has departed from God and gone astray, and God has bought every soul back again with a price.

That price was in, and through, and by Jesus Christ. God loves every soul with an everlasting love.

Satan hates the soul. In Satan's enmity towards God he is using all his energy, using every snare, his utmost cunning, employing every means *with the single purpose of ruining the soul of man.*

When a million million eternities have each lived their endless ages and have rolled by into the unthinkable past and time is no more, the soul will still be living, *a conscious personality* endowed with perpetual life reunited with the body.

God has said: "He that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30).

The Bible says: "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever" (Daniel 12:3).

* * * *

Compassion was the heartbeat of our Saviour's ministry. "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd" (Matthew 9:36). "But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth" (Psalms 86:15).

Heaven is geared to redemption. "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:7).

No man who ever had a glimpse of hell would ever want a fellow human being to go there (see Luke 16:28).

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psalms 126:5-6).

III. CONCERN

One of the first questions raised in recorded history was, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9). *Do I have moral obligations toward others?*

"And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none" (Ezekiel 22:30).

"My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them" (Ezekiel 34:6).

"And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day" (Isaiah 58:10).

"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Romans 9:1-3).

Psalms 106:23; Luke 19:41; Acts 20:31.

* * * *

Intercession is the way that leads to the winning of souls. No church can prosper without it. No Christian can grow without it. The law of life demands reproduction—that kind should beget kind.

Jesus interceded for me. "He hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors: and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:12).

You begin to *care* for a man spiritually when you begin to *pray* for him.

"Always in every prayer of mine for you" (Philippians 1:4).

"Praying always for you" (Colossians 1:3).

* * * *

Christ left this command to us: "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:38).

IV. CONTACT

It began with *personal contact*.

"He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ" (John 1:41).

With Christ came the emphasis of *seeking the lost*. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

The movement of Christianity in this world is scripturally based on personal contact. Anyone who really knows Jesus will want others to know Him.

The secret is in the words of Andrew, "We have found." The search for satisfaction in a man's soul is completed in a living knowledge of Jesus Christ. Personal evangelism is sharing this discovery.

"And he brought him to Jesus" (John 1:42).

How is this accomplished? Christ gives the answer. "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). *A love for Christ produces a love for mankind.*

* * * *

We are to be workmen "that needeth not to be ashamed" (2 Timothy 2:15). Lives today are fantastically complicated by sin. They need more than slogans and formulas. They need personal help. A conscientious doctor must deal with each patient separately and so must a conscientious soul-winner.

These guidelines must be kept in mind:

1. I MUST LIVE IT. I can't say to others, "Do as I say, but don't do as I do." They must see Christ in me (1 Corinthians 4:9). My strongest testimony is my daily life.

2. I MUST LOVE PEOPLE. I cannot pretend. The other person knows my motive immediately. The power of evangelism is described in Revelation 22:17, "the Spirit and the bride say, Come." When my *concern* for others is in keeping with the concern of the Holy Spirit toward mankind, there is effected a community of interest in the individual that results in *compulsion*.

3. I MUST MEET THE PUBLIC. Jesus was heaven's artist at this. He never met a stranger. Paul testified, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Corinthians 9:22).

Kindness will open doors (Ephesians 4:32). It will bring an affirmative response.

4. I MUST LOOK FOR NEED. Jesus said, "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2:17).

You will be surprised how many people are ready to talk. They simply need someone in whom they can have confidence. Zacchaeus was in trouble. Uninvited, he talked about his sin. *That is my point of contact—human need.*

5. I MUST COMMUNICATE. Keep away from technicalities. Refuse to become involved in debate. The Samaritan woman quibbled: "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship" (John 4:20). It wasn't her *head* that was troubling her. It was her *heart*. She needed Christ before she needed a church; a Redeemer before she needed a ritual. "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he" (John 4:25-26).

6. I MUST CONCENTRATE ON CHRIST. I can get so much "I" into my testimony that spiritual pride will offend the person to whom I am witnessing. The rule of the great Baptist still holds: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). *My business is to present Jesus* (John 12:32). Christ is the attraction.

7. I MUST USE TACT. This suggests a sensitivity to the other man's feelings. It is a spirit of discernment. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). Be natural. Be courteous. Be a good listener. Ask wise questions. Hunt for a tender spot or memory.

8. I MUST BRING A PERSON TO A DECISION. This can only be accomplished through the power and presence of the Holy Ghost (John 16:8).

Decision is not conversion. Decision is an act of the human will. God cannot regenerate until man has taken this step. "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him" (Revelation 3:20). The sinner must ask for help. God respects man's freedom of choice although it may be the wrong choice. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life" (Proverbs 13:12). Strike while the iron is hot. Don't let the mood pass. Old and sinful associations will rally and woo the sinner away.

The chance may never come again. *Opportunity is God-given.* Don't gamble with it. Press for a decision. "Ye have not because ye ask not" (James 4:2). Don't let people say of you at Judgment Day, "He never asked me to be a Christian!"

9. I MUST TEACH THEM TO LISTEN TO GOD'S VOICE. It is my business to *introduce* them to the Saviour. So often the worker only introduces himself. "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee" (Job 22:21). Let the person with whom you are dealing hear for the first time the voice of God speaking to him or her in reassurance and comfort, and you have built strength.

This is done by teaching the person two or three primary verses of scripture. Tie the seeker to God's Word. Let your friend know before you leave him that God has spoken these words to him. These words carry a guarantee.

Here is an *example*:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24).

These are the words of the Son of God. They are spoken to *you*. They are spoken with finality and authority.

10. I MUST MAKE IT CRYSTAL CLEAR THAT THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN KNOWING GOD AND KNOWING ABOUT GOD. Hearsay is not enough. *Birth is not something that is second-hand.* "And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers" (John 10:4-5).

I know God when I get down to business with Him. "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8). God has expressed His willingness in a covenant, contract, or testament. It bears His signature in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. *The moment I exercise faith toward this written word and become personally involved in agreement, that very moment the entire contract, or covenant, is in force toward me.*

If I do not associate the seeker with the Word, that person will miss his way. The devil will deceive the inquirer before breakfast. He will lie so cleverly that the inquirer will apologize to worldly associates before the day is over.

Remember! The authority is in the Word.

V. CONVERSATION

Dr. R. G. Lee calls this two-way conversation "convincing confutation." The following are answers to some excuses as Dr. Lee sets them forth.

1. Excuse: "I want to get established in business first. After that I will be a Christian."

Answer: No business should be allowed to cheat one out of heaven's blessings. Property should not kill the privilege of being a child of God. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). God called one man a fool to his face. "But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" (Luke 12:20). He was the man who neglected his soul's welfare by building barns, enlarging crops, and feeding his soul on corn.

Further Scriptures which may be used: Matthew 6:33, Psalms 1:1-2, Proverbs 29:25, Mark 10:29-30.

2. Excuse: "I am not a sinner."

Answer: But God says "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin" (Galatians 3:22). If you are not a sinner, are you keeping God's commands? What about Matthew 22:37? "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

3. Excuse: "I have no encouragement at home."

Answer: Without families we came. Without our families we go. Guilt is personal. Then, too, if you have praying parents, a saintly wife or husband, and godly children, and you continue your selfish resistance to their accepted and your rejected Saviour, your guilt is deeper. The evil living or the witness of a family is a paper house in a hailstorm.

4. Excuse: "I am good enough as I am."

Answer: God says you are bad enough—by nature. Man in his natural state does wicked deeds, thinks evil thoughts, goes to bad places, rejects Jesus Christ—because he has an evil heart. No one is naturally good. If you are good, why not become acquainted with Jesus, who is supremely good?

5. Excuse: "I am as good as others."

Answer: Violin players do not take their tones from each other, but from the piano. Builders are constantly using the plumb line, the level, and the square. We need to live by standards—not comparisons. Nobody can claim health because he is better than another diabetic or stronger than another cancer victim. Measure yourself by Jesus if you want to know how good or bad you are. Do not be too sure you are better than many within the Church. They have confessed Jesus before men—as Jesus asked. You have not. Moreover, you are forbidden to judge to justify yourself. You are not saved or lost by the deeds of others.

6. Excuse: "I have no feeling."

Answer: The world isn't run by feeling. Washington did not live at Valley Forge because he felt like it. Most people do most of their worthy acts contrary to feeling. The doctor does not deal with diseases because of feeling but because of necessity.

Scriptures which may be used: Revelation 3:20, John 3:36, Ephesians 1:13, I Peter 1:8.

7. Excuse: "I am so weak."

Answer: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength" (Is. 26:3-4). Who will keep? The Almighty God. How? "In perfect peace." On what condition? "Whose mind is stayed" on God—not on self, nor circumstances, failures, successes, nor on others. Trust—not try or worry, but trust. In whom? God. How long? All the time. Why? For God is everlasting strength.

Further Scriptures which may be used: Jude 24, I Corinthians 10:13, Philippians 1:6, Isaiah 41:10, Isaiah 41:13-14, II Timothy 1:12.

8. Excuse: "I am doing the best I can."

Answer: How long have you been doing your best? Have you succeeded? How long will it take you to make yourself fit for heaven? Suppose you die now? The best you can do is to acknowledge you cannot do anything to save yourself—except believe.

9. Excuse: "I am too big a sinner."

Answer: Jesus came to save *all* sinners. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Timothy 1:15). Are your sins scarlet? "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). Are you lost? "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Are you without strength? "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6-8). Jesus will not cast out anyone who will come to Him (John 6:37).

Further Scriptures which may be used: Matthew 9:13, Hebrews 7:25, Luke 23:39-43.

10. Excuse: "There are too many hypocrites."

Answer: Hypocrites are lost. If you let hypocrites keep you from being saved, you will spend eternity in hell with them. Besides, you have to be smaller than what you hide behind. If you hide behind a hypocrite, you must be smaller than a hypocrite.

Further Scriptures which may be used: Zechariah 13:6, Acts 1:16, Hebrews 12:2, Acts 17:30-31, Romans 14:12, Matthew 7:1-5, Romans 2:1-6, I Samuel 16:7.

11. Excuse: "A professing Christian wronged me."

Answer: Granted. But is that any reason why you should wrong God and insult Christ, who loved you and gave Himself for you? "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

12. Excuse: "There is too much to give up."

Answer: Better give up everything than lose the soul. Put Christ and your soul ahead of all else. Is it too much to give up paste pearls for glittering gems? Dirt for diamonds? Is it too much to give up rags for riches?

Further Scriptures which may be used: Psalms 84:11, Proverbs 3:17, Matthew 11:30, Proverbs 13:15, Isaiah 57:21, Romans 8:32, Mark 8:36-37, Luke 18:29-30, Psalms 16:11.

13. Excuse: "I cannot understand."

Answer: Why let mystery cause you to refuse the Master? Do you understand the chemistry of digestion? Does your ignorance of it keep you from eating steak? Can you understand why the same sun and the same soil and the same rain get sweetness into the orange and sourness into the lemon and bitterness into the persimmon?

Lay aside your excuse of mystery and trust God as you trust the telephone to transmit your voice.

Further Scriptures which may be used: Romans 11:33, I Corinthians 1:8, I Corinthians 2:14.

14. Excuse: "God is unjust."

Answer: Who is God? Who are you? Injustice is sin. Do you mean to accuse God of sin? God is so just that He never demands two payments for one debt. Jesus paid your sin debt on the Cross—all of it. Therefore, when you accept Christ, you do not have that sin debt to pay.

15. Excuse: "Folks would laugh."

Answer: Better let them laugh than to have God laugh. "I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh" (Proverbs 1:26). Shun evil companions. "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men." "The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble" (Proverbs 4:14, 19). Do not be ashamed of Christ. "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32, 33).

16. Excuse: "Not now."

Answer: Every time you say no, it is more difficult to say yes. The time and day is *now*. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2).

Seek the Lord while He may be found. Delay is decision for the wrong way. "Today—if you will," saith the Lord. Tomorrow is the day when the idle man works, the thief becomes honest, the drunkard sober. Tomorrow is a period nowhere to be found except, perhaps, in the fool's calendar. God's call is not a call for tomorrow, but for *today*.

Dr. Lee says of the above, "In this manner do I deal with excuse-makers. With many excuse-makers I have had success. With some, I have not."

Further Scriptures which may be used: Proverbs 27:1, Proverbs 29:1, Isaiah 55:6, Hebrews 2:3.

Some other common excuses and questions are:

17. Excuse: "I think you are making too big a fuss about this."

Answer: Why is Calvary such a big date in history? "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Isn't your soul important? "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 16:26).

Isn't life uncertain? "This night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" (Luke 12:20).

Death, judgment, and hell lie ahead (Galatians 6:7, Hebrews 9:27).

The Son of God asks for your decision (Revelation 3:20).

18. Excuse: "I will take my chances."

Answer: God always has the last word. "Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And

he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 22:12-13).

Nebuchadnezzar gave this testimony: "... the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will" (Daniel 4:17). "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Daniel 4:35).

God's Word has eternal force (Isaiah 55:11).

A judgment must be rendered on each life lived (John 5:27-29).

19. Excuse: "My friends mean so much to me."

Answer: Are they your friends or your enemies? "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

Do your friends care for your soul? "And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him" (Luke 15:14-16).

You will gain a greater Friend, and friends (John 15:15, Matthew 19:29).

Your example can lead your unsaved friends to Christ (John 1:45).

20. Excuse: "I am going to have a good time in this world and let the next world take care of itself."

Answer: Others have followed this course before. "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented" (Luke 16:25).

Your life can prove to be a *charade* (Luke 12:15).

Opportunity brings responsibility (Ecclesiastes 11:9).

21. Excuse: "Please do not talk to me about it."

Answer: I am simply bringing God's message to you. "Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them" (Jeremiah 1:17). "And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear" (Ezekiel 3:11).

My business is to *witness* (II Corinthians 2:15-16).

22. Excuse: "I am my own boss."

Answer: Wise men and women receive *counsel*. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise" (Proverbs 12:15).

The straight way is the best way (Matthew 7:13-14).

The easiest thing in the world to get is a *wrong answer*.

23. Excuse: "Frankly I am skeptical about the whole matter."

Answer: Are you honestly looking for *answers*? Will you accept evidence as it would be accepted before a court of law? Are you an *inquirer* or *spiritual subversive*? "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator" (Romans 1:25). "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowl-

edge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient" (Romans 1:28).

Jesus Christ threw out this challenge: "He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God" (John 8:47).

You can *doubt* to your own peril (2 Thessalonians 2:10; 2:12).

The way to find out whether or not a thing is true and worthy of one's acceptance is to put it to a *personal test* (Psalms 34:8).

24. Excuse: "I want to be absolutely neutral about this matter."

Answer: There are some things you can't be neutral about—food, drink, sleep, light, for instance. That is why Christ likened Himself to the *necessities* of life. "I am that bread of life" (John 6:48). "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

Jesus said: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matthew 12:30).

25. Excuse: "I believe God is too good to damn anyone."

Answer: That is not what the Bible says. "Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish" (Psalms 1:5-6).

God places your salvation or damnation on your acceptance or rejection of Jesus Christ (John 12:48).

It is not God that is hard. It is you! "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up into thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Romans 2:5).

Every agency of God seeks to lead you to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

26. Excuse: "How can I reconcile the doctrine of hell with the Christian's God of salvation?"

Answer: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

"Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place" (Acts 1:25).

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

"Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?" (Ezekiel 18:23).

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matthew 25:46).

"Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented" (Luke 16:25).

"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matthew 23:33).

"But rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

"Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it. And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled: but the Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in right-

eousness" (Isaiah 5:14-16).

27. Excuse: "I am religious."

Answer: Religion is often something that is on the outside. "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 7:22-23).

No man was more religious than Paul (Galatians 1:14, Philippians 3:6, I Timothy 1:13; 1:15).

Cornelius was a religious man who needed to be saved (Acts 11:14).

28. Excuse: "I am trying to be a Christian."

Answer: It is not *trying* it is *trusting* that counts. A drowning man tries with all his might and perishes, but trusts in the saving power of another and is rescued. "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation" (Isaiah 12:2).

Ishmael was Abraham's fleshly attempt to fulfill the promise of God (he tried). Isaac was God's provision (he trusted) (Romans 4:3, 5).

No work that you can do for yourself can ever substitute in merit for the work that Jesus has done for you on the Cross (Ephesians 2:9).

Your righteousness is in Christ alone. "...and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). To try is to fail! "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10).

29. Excuse: "What is sin?"

Answer: Sin is breaking God's law (I John 3:10).

Everything that is not morally right is sin (I John 5:17). Unbelief is sin (John 16:8-9).

Questionable indulgences are sin (Romans 14:23).

Missing the mark is sin (Romans 3:23).

Undone duty is sin (James 4:17).

30. Excuse: "My sins are small so why worry?"

Answer: Because any sin torments. "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked" (Isaiah 48:22).

Because any sin separates you from God (Isaiah 59:2).

Because any sin enslaves you (John 8:34).

Because any sin ends in death (Romans 6:23).

Because any sin excludes from heaven (I Corinthians 6:9).

31. Excuse: "I may be punished but not eternally."

Answer: If God is eternal and heaven is eternal—hell will be eternal also. "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

There is "a resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29).

Don't forget there is the "second death" (Revelation 20:13-15).

32. Excuse: "I am too old now to become a Christian."

Answer: There is no age limit (II Corinthians 6:2).

God has foreseen your problem. "But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, *even in the latter days*, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (for the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers, which he swore unto them" (Deuteronomy 4:29-31).

33. Excuse: "I do not think I am old enough to make a decision."

Answer: You have reached an age of accountability if you sense Christ's approach to your life. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them" (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

The time to make a decision is when your conscience is tender (2 Samuel 19:35).

The best time is *now* (Hebrews 3:13).

34. Excuse: "I intend to before I die."

Answer: Can you determine the hour of your death? *Nothing is so uncertain as life* (Proverbs 29:1, Job 34:20).

God warns against *presumption* (James 4:13-17).

There is no time like the present time. "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near" (Isaiah 55:6).

35. Excuse: "I am afraid I cannot hold out."

Answer: Jesus not only saves but He keeps. He is the Good Shepherd (Romans 14:4).

The same One who convicts you is concerned about you. "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it" (1 Thessalonians 5:24).

Paul gives his experience. "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

God has made an investment in you and He will work to protect that investment (Philippians 1:6).

To know Him is to have assurance. Commit your entire life to His care. Leave the future in your Master's hands! (2 Timothy 1:12).

36. Excuse: "I am afraid of persecution."

Answer: It is a cowardly thing to deny Jesus Christ. "But the fearful . . . shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8).

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

So little is asked for so much in return. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

It is all or nothing. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us" (2 Timothy 2:12).

You join a select company. It is a chance of a lifetime to do something worthwhile. "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets" (Luke 6:22-23).

He does not ask you to do anything for Him that He did not do for you (Hebrews 12:2).

37. Excuse: "I think that Jesus Christ is only one of the great men of history."

Answer: He claimed to be God. "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God"

(Philippians 2:6). He was put to death for this claim (Matthew 26:63-65). The resurrection substantiated this claim. "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:24).

The moral grandeur of His life surpasses anything on record. "Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?" (John 8:46).

No one has so influenced history (Luke 2:34).

There is the repeated testimony of personal experience. "Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the World" (John 4:42).

There is the open challenge to prove His divinity for yourself. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:17).

38. Question: "Why does God allow evil in this world?"

Answer: Freedom of choice is the Creator's great gift to the human race. "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19).

Sin originated in man, not in God. God prevents sin's dominion (Romans 6:14).

God has, at His own cost, provided a remedy. "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).

39. Excuse: "There is so much suffering."

Answer: This is not the world as God planned it—the world that He said was "very good" (Genesis 1:31). It is the world in which man has spread his sin. "Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same" (Job 4:8).

God has provided an alternative. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

It is not the world that God intends to establish (Isaiah 65:20).

40. Question: "Does this have to be done publicly?"

Answer: God makes the rules. He has undertaken our salvation completely; therefore He has the right to say how we are to receive it. "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33). "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10).

Like true marriage—a miracle of trust happens in the heart first; then an open acknowledgment, through proper ordinances, is made to the public.

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

"Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: but he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God" (Luke 12:8, 9).

"Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:42, 43).

41. Question: "What about baptism?"

Answer: Baptism like Communion "shows the Lord's death." It is faith you show publicly when you are baptized.

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Romans 6:3-5).

Baptism is our open profession before the world that we are now living a miracle, supernatural life of Christian grace by the quickening, regenerating power of God in us.

You should be baptized because like your Lord it fulfilleth "... all righteousness..." It keeps setting forth the gospel of Jesus before this world. Baptism is one of the first tests of obedience.

42. Excuse: "I cannot break with my sins."

Answer: Salvation is a life-and-death choice. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).

You cannot live one way and die another way. "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6:8, Revelation 21:8).

You cannot do it in your own strength. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

Christ can reach you where you are (Hebrews 7:25).

43. Excuse: "I see no harm in worldly amusements."

Answer: The approach to this question should always be *positive*, and not negative. Instead of asking, "What *harm* is there in it?" I should ask, "What *good* is there in it?"

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17).

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

"All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any" (1 Corinthians 6:12).

As a Christian, I am responsible to use my body and my mind in trust for God's glory (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Sharp warnings appear in the New Testament: "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Corinthians 3:17). "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing" (2 Corinthians 6:17). "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus 1:16).

My aim should always be to give my utmost for His highest (2 Timothy 2:4).

44. Excuse: "I am not respectable enough to be a Christian."

Answer: It is your *desire* to be a Christian that counts, "And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy

sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatter calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry" (Luke 15:20-24). See also Luke 18:10-14.

We can never make ourselves good enough. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Romans 4:5). See also Isaiah 41:13.

45. Excuse: "I am afraid Jesus will not receive me."

Answer: You have His word for it. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

God is no respecter of persons (Romans 10:13, Luke 15:2). See also Revelation 22:17.

46. Excuse: "I have tried before and failed."

Answer: One failure need not mean final defeat. *Upon whom did you depend?* Did you make a complete surrender? Did you keep something back? Did you confess Christ publicly? Were you faithful in prayer? Did you seek guidance from the Word? "They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). Did you go to work for Christ? (Luke 11:24-26). See also I Peter 2:2.

Make a full surrender. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

Keep in touch! "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41).

Be present in church (Hebrews 10:25).

47. Excuse: "I think I have committed the unpardonable sin."

Answer: You will *know* if you have committed this sin. The desire to be a Christian will be forever past. No spiritual impression will ever again come to your soul. *A hardening process will have taken place.*

"Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (Matthew 12:31-32).

In another passage we read: "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation" (Mark 3:29).

The tragedy lies in *the eternally unforgiven soul*. Since the Holy Spirit is the Agent in conviction and conversion there can be no rebirth without the Holy Spirit. To sin against the Holy Spirit is to sin against your own soul. To blaspheme against the Holy Spirit is to shut yourself off forever from access to God.

"There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it" (1 John 5:16).

You will *know* if you cross this deadline. Those who have committed this sin are completely given over to Satan and have not the slightest interest in spiritual matters. Paul describes it as being "past feeling" (Ephesians 4:19).

On the other hand Satan, *the deceiver*, will lie to you and

tell you that you are unpardonable. God makes no exceptions in His offer of salvation. "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39).

Murder is not unpardonable. David confessed his sin and was forgiven (Psalms 32:5).

Theft is not unpardonable. The penitent thief on the cross was pardoned (Luke 23:43).

Blasphemy is not unpardonable. Paul was a blasphemer and he was pardoned (1 Timothy 1:13).

Adultery is not unpardonable. The woman of Samaria was saved (John 4:18).

One of the amazing records of forgiveness is found in I Corinthians 6:9-11.

The person who sincerely asks for pardon will never be refused. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:7). "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). See also Acts 10:43).

Paul was a great sinner but he obtained salvation (1 Timothy 1:15-16).

48. Question: "Would not suicide be the best way out of my troubles?"

Answer: There is only one solution for guilt consciousness—forgiveness and cleansing (Job 15:20, 1 John 1:9).

Self-murder only hastens judgment. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12).

A correct relationship with Christ brings a new approach to living. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Get the *sin-problem* settled first and then the *trouble-problem* can be settled (Matthew 6:33).

49. Excuse: "I am seeking but I cannot find Christ."

Answer: Christ is not distant. His presence is noticeable. "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:27-28).

Paul says that Christ makes Himself real to a person through the exercise of faith (Romans 10:6-11).

Be sure you are looking in the right direction! "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13).

50. Excuse: "I am ashamed to come to Christ."

Answer: If we could save ourselves, we wouldn't need the Saviour (Matthew 9:12-13).

Salvation is for the *lost*. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6-8).

51. Excuse: "I would like to be a Christian but I cannot forgive my enemies."

Answer: Through God's help you can do what you cannot do otherwise. "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

I become a recipient of God's *grace*. "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:8). See also 2 Corinthians 12:9.

Tell God only that *you are willing to be made willing*. (Matthew 6:14-15).

52. Excuse: "I want to be saved but I cannot believe."

Answer: *Whom* does the Bible ask you to believe? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

Do you believe that God has saved *others*? Do you believe that He wants to save *you*? Do you believe that He *can* save you? Will you trust Him to save you *now*?

You are saved through the Word which is God's contract with you, and because God wants you to be saved (John 5:24). "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12-13).

Use the faith that God gives you! "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). See also Romans 5:1.

53. Question: "Does not the Bible have inconsistencies and contradictions in it?"

Answer: Where are they? The Bible is *revelation*. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9).

The Bible is a *locked book to a locked heart*. "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand" (Daniel 12:10). "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Certainly there are mysteries presented in God's Word! "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen" (2 Peter 3:16-18).

Know Him and you will know His book!

54. Question: "How can I know there is a God?"

Answer: There are *three sources* of material. First, there is the Bible. Second, there is nature. Third, there is man. These point to the Creator. None are possible by happenstance. None could have been produced by accident.

"Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them" (Romans 1:19).

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained" (Psalms 8:3).

"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Psalms 33:6).

55. Question: "Why do I need the blood?"

Answer: This is the eternal law of redemption believed in by all civilizations and found among all peoples. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you

upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17:11).

Jesus died for you and me! (Matthew 26:28).

Someone had to take my place and bear my guilt. "... and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22).

He tasted death for me. Thus He bore the supreme penalty of my sins (Romans 5:9-10).

It took the greatest price in the universe. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19).

56. Question: "Why should I accept the Bible as the final authority?"

Answer: The Bible has survived all unbelievers. "For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar..." (Romans 3:3-4).

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16).

God's very character rests upon the authenticity and authority of the Bible (Mark 13:31).

57. Question: "What must I do to be saved?"

Answer: God, through Jesus Christ, His Son, has provided a way for you (Isaiah 53:5-6). That 6th verse begins and ends with the same word, "all." It is a universal salvation for a universal need.

Your part is "to receive," God's part is to give you "power to become." "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12).

Conversion and regeneration go together. When you have turned to God (conversion), He will turn over your life (regeneration). God's part is as essential as your part (John 3:7).

Saving faith reaches out and believes what God's Word says about you. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24).

Your salvation is in your acceptance of what Christ has done for you. Did He, or did He not, die for you? (Acts 16:31).

Outward form is useless until something has happened within your life. Salvation is like marriage. All the ceremony involved can't really marry a couple unless first of all something real toward each other has happened; in each of their hearts. When that occurs, they want the whole world to know (Romans 10:9-19).

God saves sinners only. Are you a sinner? Do you need two things—(1) FORGIVENESS and (2) CLEANSING?

What God has done for others He will do for you. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13).

Jesus foretold that excuses and alibis would be given. *Excuses are never reasons.*

"Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make

excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper" (Luke 14:16-24).

Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness he requireth
Is to feel your need of Him.

—Joseph Hart

VI. CONVERSION

Steps to the Christian Life:

1. **REPENT.** Turn around. Change your mind. "Except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).

2. **RECEIVE HIM.** You need the Saviour. Accept Him. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12).

3. **REGENERATION FOLLOWS:** This is what God does for you. This is the New Birth—a miracle of spiritual life performed by the Holy Ghost. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13). See also John 11:25.

4. **REJOICE PUBLICLY.** Make your testimony for Christ. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9-10). See also Matthew 10:32-33.

5. **REQUEST WATER BAPTISM.** This is an outward testimony to an inward transaction. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

Baptism without believing is useless. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so, we also should walk in newness of life. For, if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Romans 6:4-5).

6. **READ THE WORD.** The Word is the source of your faith. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5:13). See also Romans 10:17, Psalms 119:105.

7. **REACH GOD IN PRAYER.** Prayer is conversation with God. Life is sustained by union and communion (Ephesians 6:18, James 4:2). "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him" (1 John 5:14-15).

8. **RELATE YOUR EXPERIENCE TO OTHERS**
You maintain strength by exercise.

"When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul" (Ezekiel 33:8-9). See also 2 Kings 7:9, Acts 1:8.

9. RESIST THE DEVIL. Temptation is not sin. It is yielding to temptation that is sin. "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7).

"For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:15-16).

10. RESTITUTION. Your guilt is gone, and you can convert your influence for good. ". . . if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold" (Luke 19:8). "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:16).

11. "RENDER . . . TO GOD THE THINGS THAT ARE GOD'S." Start tithing your income immediately. "Will a man rob God? . . . Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:8, 10). See also I Corinthians 16:2.

12. REGULARLY ATTEND CHURCH AND SUNDAY SCHOOL. Associate yourself immediately with God's people. Take out church membership (Hebrews 10:25).

"And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day . . ." (Luke 4:16). These are the "things that pertain unto life and godliness . . ." (2 Peter 1:3).

VII. CONVINCEMENT

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4).

"But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins" (Luke 5:24).

It is too late in another world. Forgiveness of sins must be received on this side (1 John 3:2).

What is this assurance? How can I know for certain?

* * * *

There are second chances in health, money, championships, and education; but when a man passes from this life, he cannot return for a second chance. *Your religion must furnish you proof.* You have a right to demand it.

The Bible can never be the private and exclusive property of any one religion. God gave it to the world. It cannot be copyrighted. It is not man's product. Therefore, look for your eternal assurance from the Bible. *It is what God says that counts.*

Calvary is ridiculous if your life can be changed and you do not know it. Something you may have and not know it, is something you can lose and never miss. *The proof of your salvation is not by sensation. It is by Scripture.*

Certain evidences must be manifested in our lives immediately. These evidences are recorded in the Bible.

1. THERE IS AN INFALLIBLE INSIDE WITNESS. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself" (1 John 5:10). The preacher and the church may tell you that you are all right. But you, *yourself*, are the final judge in that matter.

Christ asked Peter about this. He said, "Lovest thou me more than these?" (John 21:15). There was no doubt in Peter's mind about his relationship to Jesus.

2. THERE IS A FAMILY RELATIONSHIP. "We know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14). *You sense a different and vital relationship with God's children.* You are at home with spiritual things. It is a blood-tie stronger than any family background in this world (Galatians 6:10).

3. THERE IS A NEW IMAGE. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). A New Testament Christian is not a patched-up job, a reformed sinner. There is a new will; there are new affections; there is a new purpose *because there is a new nature.*

The emptiest and unhappiest occupation in the world is trying to act like a Christian when you are not a Christian. You do not gradually stop stealing. You *stop* stealing. It is *miracle*, not *magic*.

4. THERE IS A RESPONSE OF VICTORY. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). See also John 17:15, 16. *The born-again man or woman is not motivated by this world-system.*

Fancy yourself on the farm. It is hot midsummer. Nearby is a big mud wallow. Here comes a pig. He grunts with contentment as he wades into the slime. You say, "Mr. Hog, why do you want to submerge in that filth? Why do you not seek a cleaner environment?" That pig has not the slightest interest in your ideas for his betterment. He loves the mud.

Now watch a sheep with long white wool. The moment a sheep notices mud it heads toward safer ground. The sheep has a different nature. So has a New Testament Christian.

* * * *

These are Bible proofs. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5:13).

Paul testified on two continents (2 Timothy 3:11).

VIII. CAMOUFLAGE

Today is a day of *substitutes*. Nylon has been substituted for silk. Oleomargarine has been substituted for butter. There are many substitutes offered for salvation. Beware!

1. SERVICE IS NOT SALVATION. "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves" (Matthew 23:15). How can you lead others to Christ when you do not know Christ yourself?

2. TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF IS NOT SALVATION. Man does not get saved by *reforming*, saying, "I will clean up my life, and take a new start."

"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Isaiah 64:6). "How ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (1 Thessalonians 1:9). *Notice the direction!* They did not turn from idols to God. The new birth is a divine miracle.

3. **ASSERTING ONE'S MANHOOD IS NOT SALVATION.** Men "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1) cannot throw back their shoulders and assert their manhood for righteousness. The cross of Christ does not call upon men to assert their manhood. *The cross of Christ exposes men's degradation.* That is part of the "offense of the cross" (Galatians 5:11). It does not appeal to man's pride. It unsparingly shows man that he cannot do anything for himself. He has no righteousness or decency to offer to God.

4. **RIGHT THINKING IS NOT SALVATION.** It is not cultivating and concentrating on a "divine spark" that is within you. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalms 51:5). It is not keeping a picture of your mother, sweetheart, or your wife in your billfold, and looking at it frequently. *It is not thinking high thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9). How can you think high thoughts with a base nature?*

5. **DENYING THE EXISTENCE OF SIN IS NOT SALVATION.** God does not deny sin. *Calvary is God's recognition of sin.* "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). "But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin" (Galatians 3:22). One of the first steps toward salvation is to recognize your sin—not deny it.

6. **TO DENY SELF IS NOT SALVATION.** The heathen are masters at this. They practice all kinds of asceticism (1 Corinthians 13:3). *You are not saved by crucifying yourself.* It is not proving to yourself that you can do hard things.

7. **SACRIFICE IS NOT SALVATION.** Dying for a great cause—the supreme sacrifice—is not salvation. *Discipline does not cleanse a man from sin.* If that were true, then everybody who entered a penitentiary would become a Christian. Paying for wrongdoing does not make a person a Christian. (1 Samuel 15:22).

* * * *

There is no *sidedoor* into heaven. Jesus said, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John 10:9).

"He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber" (John 10:1). You cannot *steal* your way into heaven.

IX. CHRIST

The Master has not asked us to do what He did not do constantly during His ministry upon earth. He says, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19).

His record is one of personal contact from when He said to Andrew, "Come and see" to His assurance to the penitent thief, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."

He is clear and concise about God's plan of salvation.

1. He came to meet a human need. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners . . ." (Luke 5:32). Salvation is for sinners only.

2. He came to be the sinner's substitute. "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11).

3. He came to do what none other can do. "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

4. He came to provide assurance to the trusting sinner. "Thy sins are forgiven . . . go in peace" (Luke 7:48-50).

James remembers emphatically the passion that his brother manifested toward the lost. He reflects this when he says, "Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:20).

X. CONDENSATION

The story of salvation can be told in *four words*:

Sin
Calvary
Faith
Life

1. Salvation is needed. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

2. Salvation is provided. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2:24).

3. Salvation is offered. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

4. Salvation accepted. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12).

There is a time, we know not when,
A place, we know not where;
Which marks the destiny of men
To glory or despair.

There is a line, by us unseen,
Which crosses every path,
Which marks the boundary between
God's mercy and his wrath.

To pass that limit is to die,
To die as if by stealth;
It does not dim the beaming eye,
Nor pale the glow of health.

The conscience may be still at ease,
The spirit light and gay;
And that which pleases still may please,
And care be thrust away.

But on that forehead God hath set
Indelibly a mark;
Unseen by man, for man as yet,
Is blind and in the dark.

He feels perchance that all is well
And every fear is calmed;
He lives, he dies, he walks in hell,
Not only doomed, but damned!

O, where is that mysterious line
That may by men be crossed,
Beyond which God himself hath sworn,
That he who goes is lost?

An answer from the skies repeats,
"Ye who from God depart."

TODAY, O hear His voice,
TODAY repent and harden not your heart.

—Joseph Addison Alexander