

Religious but Lost!

by John R. Rice

The sermon emphasizes the peril of being religious without true salvation, urging listeners to examine their faith and ensure they are genuinely saved.

Scripture: Matthew 7:21, John 3:16, John 14:6, Acts 16:31, Romans 10:1

Topics: "False Salvation", "True Faith"

Description

John R. Rice delivers a powerful sermon warning about the deception of false hopes in salvation, emphasizing the importance of truly knowing and surrendering to Jesus Christ for eternal life. He highlights the sobering truth that many religious individuals, including preachers and church workers, may be lost if they do not genuinely trust in Christ for salvation. Rice stresses the necessity of doing the will of the Father by believing in Jesus as the only way to Heaven, contrasting it with relying on good deeds, church membership, or religious rituals for salvation. He urges listeners to examine their hearts, confess their sins, and trust in Christ alone for forgiveness and assurance of salvation.

Transcript

"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." - Matt. 7:21-23.

Multitudes of people who expect to go to Heaven will go to a Hell of torment. Thousands of "good" people, "moral" people, church members, even church workers - yes, and, alas, even prophets, priests and preachers - will find themselves lost when they expected to be saved, condemned when they expected approval, cast out of Heaven when they expected to be received into eternal bliss. That is the explicit meaning of the words of our Lord quoted above.

Newspaper columns sometimes carry stories of "Life's Most Embarrassing Moment," but nothing in life could ever bring the horrible humiliation, disappointment and blame that is here described and awaiting multitudes who think they are safe but lost. They claim salvation; they shall receive damnation. They are self-satisfied under a delusion, a false refuge; before Jesus Christ they will be horrified to hear that He never knew them.

Mark you, this is not a warning that people should beware lest they lose salvation. Jesus did not say He would turn against those He once knew, that He would reject those He once knew, that He would reject those He had once accepted. Rather, to multitudes of professing righteous people He solemnly warns that He will be compelled to say to them, "I never knew you. You never were saved; you never were born again."

Many of those who say, "Lord, Lord," will never enter the kingdom of Heaven. Many of those who have done wonderful deeds, even claiming to have done them in Jesus' name, will fail to be received in Heaven. They are professors without possession. They are church members, perhaps, but not Christians. They are reformed but not reborn. They have lamps but no oil. They are dwelling under the delusion that they are all right when really they have wicked hearts covered with sin and dwell under the wrath of Almighty God!

Many Preachers, Church Workers, Many Who Have Successfully Cast Out Devils, Many Who Call Jesus "Lord," Will Yet Wake Up in Hell!

How terrible is this warning to those who have prophesied, to those who have really preached and taught and worked in Jesus' name! Yet the dear Saviour will be compelled to say to them, "I never knew you"! - Preachers who really got people converted, workers who literally cast out devils, some who actually spoke in Jesus' name - not modernists, not heathen people, but many of those who actually called Jesus "Lord," - will be barred from the kingdom of Heaven and will hear Jesus say, "I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity"!

Doubtless Judas worked miracles in Jesus' name. Doubtless he, like other apostles, preached the Gospel and had people saved. He was sent out with the rest of the twelve to preach and heal and cast out devils (Matt 10). He was a preacher, a prophet, an apostle, a worker in Jesus' name, a church member. He was religious, but he was lost and he went to Hell. I beg you, however religious you are, **MAKE SURE YOU ARE SAVED!**

In the same seventh chapter of Matthew, read verses 13 and 14:

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate: and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Here is a startling and sad truth. In the words of Jesus Christ, more people are going to Hell than are going to Heaven. More people are lost than are saved. It is a narrow road with a strait gate that leads into life, and few there be that find it. But it is a broad road and wide gate that leads to destruction and many go in thereat, says Jesus. According to our Saviour, relatively few people out of the millions of earth will be in Heaven. A majority of the people in the world are poor, lost, deceived, deluded, and condemned sinners, bound for Hell.

People sometimes say, concerning different denominations or churches, "We are just going to Heaven by different roads." But that is not true. Jesus said that there is only one road to Heaven, and that a very narrow one, and the gate is strait, or narrow. There is only one way to Heaven. Many who say, "Lord, Lord," will not get to Heaven, but only those that do the will of the Father as regards the plan of salvation. Those who take His plan of salvation are saved by His blood. Those who depend upon their good deeds,

their morals, their church membership or ceremonies or feeling or experiences are on the broad road that leads to destruction, and at death or at the second coming of Christ they face the tragic awakening when Christ will tell them, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Most of the population of the earth have a hope of some kind. Most claim some kind of religion. Many are Catholics, or Jews, or Protestants. Many have hope in the philosophies of Buddhism or Hinduism. Many seek a sense of security in their doctrines of morality, Unitarianism or evolution. Many, like so-called Christian Scientists, say there is no such thing as sin. Multitudes deny that there is a Hell. Uncounted millions depend upon some religious ceremony to save them, while millions of others count upon a life of good deeds and morality to keep them from the wrath of God. But according to the plain words of Jesus Christ, the great majority of the human race live under a false hope and will die rejected by Christ and will be tormented in flames as workers of iniquity who never knew Christ as a personal Saviour!

As kindly and tenderly as I know how, I urge every reader to make sure of his salvation. Millions who claim to be saved are lost. You may be one of them. Millions of church members are unconverted, unregenerated sinners living under the wrath of God. Perhaps you are one of them. In Hell today there are countless millions of good Methodists, or faithful Presbyterians, or orthodox Baptists - orthodox in doctrine, baptized or confirmed, respected members of churches who have gone to the place of despair, never having been truly saved. No doubt many Lutherans, Episcopalians, Seventh-Day Adventists, Catholics, Christian Scientists, and Disciples or Church of Christ people, or those of many other faiths, definitely have missed the Way, have had a false hope and are now in torment. Some of them read their Bibles, attended church regularly, gave to the poor, gave their tithes, observed fast days, went to confessional, perhaps, or attended prayer meetings. Doubtless many were faithful in "church work." But these found, when they came to face Christ, that He would not receive them, that they were in His sight workers of iniquity, and so commanded to depart into everlasting shame and torment! I tell you now, and solemnly that this is a serious matter, and that if you do not know that you are saved, you had better make sure about the question today.

Remember that even Judas Iscariot, an apostle of Jesus Christ, died a lost man and went "to his own place" (Acts 1:25).

Many Such Warnings In Bible

In recent years I have been greatly concerned to find many, many church members, and many outside the churches, who show no evidence of ever having been born again, who can give no definite testimony to their faith in Christ, yet are content and untroubled about the future. I read in the Bible again and again plain warnings to those kind of people. From the many times this question is brought up in the Bible, it is evident that there is a real and terrible danger of one's being deceived and depending on a false hope, only to discover at last that he is eternally lost.

The Saviour said, "Behold, a sower went forth to sow. And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away" (Matt. 13:3-6). Clearly the seeds falling on stony places represent those who have heard the Gospel and were somewhat moved by it but not genuinely converted. Jesus explained that class of hearers in these words: "But he that received the

seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended" (Matt. 13:20, 21). Here are pretended Christians but with no root in themselves. They have received the Word with joy temporarily but had no real work of grace in their hearts, no new birth, no actual regeneration. Jesus in this parable mentioned two classes of unsaved people - those who carelessly let the Word of God pass by without concern, and those who receive the Word gladly and make some claim as Christians and have some hope of Heaven but are never truly saved, having no root in themselves. This indicates that the Saviour knew multitudes would claim to be saved who were not.

It would appear from the words of our Saviour that some would be at the very gate of Heaven, expecting to sit down to the wedding feast with all the saints, then be cast outside. In Matthew, chapter 22, Jesus tells of "a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding." When they refused to come, then all were invited. Servants gathered all they found, bad and good, and the wedding was furnished with guests. But the Saviour said that "... when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, 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. For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. 22:11-14).

Here was a man who expected to attend the wedding supper, even came into the house with others who had on the wedding garments. Doubtless the man was well satisfied with his own garments. They seemed to him white enough, I suppose, but they did not meet the strict requirements of the King. The man without the wedding garment was speechless before the King and was cast outside into outer darkness where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth by those who longed to enter but could not! Surely Jesus meant that many will desire Heaven but will miss it. Many have false hopes and are deluded even while they are damned. You may have heard God's invitation, you may have felt that you are all right. Possibly you have compared yourself with other church members and are sure that you live a better life than they. Perhaps, even, that is true. At the same time, if you do not have the required wedding garment, you will be cast outside when God the Father makes the wedding feast for His Son, Jesus Christ, and when all the redeemed are caught up in glory to the wedding supper. Are you sure that you are saved? Do you know, are you absolutely sure, that you have on the wedding garment of Christ's righteousness?

Again Jesus warned about this matter in the parable of the ten virgins. In Matthew 25 He tells of "... ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps." While the bridegroom tarried, and all the girls slumbered, the wicks which had no oil burned out. The five wise virgins who had oil in their vessels with their lamps, slumbered, and found their lamps needed trimming. But when the wicks were trimmed, the light was clear and strong again. But the foolish virgins had no light because they had no oil and their lamps went out. The foolish virgins then went to buy oil. But when they returned, others had entered in to the marriage and "the door was shut." The bridegroom said to them, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

Again, surely Jesus meant to show us that multitudes expect to be saved who will not be saved. Many have lamps with no oil. Many have hopes, but their hopes are not well founded. Many hide themselves behind a refuge of lies and say, "Peace," when there is no peace. There are many lost people mixed in with the saved. If Jesus should come today, it would be a startling and horrible disappointment to millions

to learn that they would be left behind, unsaved, unregenerate sinners who never had the oil of salvation!

And so it is again and again in the parables and teachings of Jesus. He told about a net let down into the sea which gathered up good fish and bad. The good fish were taken and the bad fish were thrown away. Notice that the point of the story is not that there were bad fish in the sea, but that bad fish got in the net with good fish (Matt. 13:47-50). Jesus told about wheat, and tares planted in the wheat, so that men could not tell the difference. Both alike were left to stay until the harvest and then would be separated. So we are told, "The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels" (Matt. 13:39). At the end of the age God and His angels will separate the saved and the lost. Notice there that Jesus was not speaking about tares out in the pastures, nor in the fence corners, nor in the weed patch, but tares in the field with the wheat! There are many lost people in the churches. There are some deceived, unregenerate sinners posing as children of God who will be brought to the horrible disillusionment one day to learn that they are lost forever. I beg you as kindly and tenderly as I know how, make sure you are saved. Settle it for certain today. Every preacher should search out his own heart until he can know beyond any doubt that he is a child of God. Preachers have been deceived and have died unsaved, as did Judas Iscariot. Jesus said, "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?" (Matt. 7: 22). Surely, since so many religious workers will be found unconverted, you ought to see again to your foundation and know whether your hope is a false hope. If again you find the sweet certainty, the double assurance that you are a born-again child of God, you will have cause for rejoicing anew. Jesus said, "Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20). But if you should find yourself unsaved, then how important that you find it out now before it is too late!

No wonder the Apostle Peter under divine inspiration wrote: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (II Pet. 1:10). And again the beloved Paul was moved by the Holy Ghost to write, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (II Cor. 13:5). If you will read the book of Hebrews, you must be struck with the repeated exhortations, the warnings to those who might think themselves saved but are deceived.

Jesus told of two men who went up into the Temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a publican (Luke 18:9-14). The Pharisee thought he was all right, in fact, said he was all right. He prayed, he tithed, he fasted, he lived a good moral life, yet he went down to his house lost. Paul held the garments of those who stoned Stephen, and went about breathing out threatenings and slaughter. As he started down to Damascus, Paul would have said that his soul was safe. Later on he tells us that after the strictest sect he had lived a Pharisee and had tried to live blameless according to the law. But when the Lord Jesus appeared to him from Heaven in a light shining brighter than the sun, Paul found that he was nothing but a poor, lost sinner persecuting Jesus Christ! I tell you, you had better be warned by the Scriptures and make sure that you are saved.

Remarkable Examples of People Who Were Lost but Thought Themselves Saved

In the first revival I ever attempted to conduct in a little country church near Decatur, Texas, I remember a man for whom his wife and daughter prayed. One night as the invitation song was being sung under the little brush arbor, I heard someone call for me. In a thicket of plum bushes beside the tabernacle, the daughter and a girl friend knelt beside the gray-haired man. He said to me, "Brother Rice, tell these girls to

leave me alone. I am all right."

I told him that if he was really all right, it was strange that his wife was so burdened about him, that his daughter was continually praying and crying about his salvation .

He replied, "Why, Brother Rice, I used to be superintendent of a Sunday school. I have prayed in public. I am as well off as these other church members."

"But that does not make a Christian," I said. "Praying in public, doing church work, living a good moral life is not enough. You are a lost sinner if you have not been saved."

"I have never done much of anything wrong," he said. "About all I have ever done is to cuss a little bit. I am as good a Christian as the others are."

I told him that he might just as well say that he had only killed a few men as far as being a lost sinner was concerned. That seemed to astonish him, and I asked him plainly, "Now I am not asking you whether you live a good life, whether you are a moral man. I am asking you whether you have ever been born again. Did you ever trust Jesus Christ to change your heart and to forgive your sins and make you a new creature?"

Very gravely he looked me in the face and then he answered, "No, I guess I never did!"

"Then don't you think it is time you got that settled?"

He assented and came with me to the front. There he knelt down on the oat straw under that simple brush arbor, and by the light of gasoline torches, lifted up his face and with tears said, "O God, if You will forgive me and save me, I will do anything You want me to do!" He was happily saved and had the assurance in his heart that God had forgiven him just as He promised in His Word to forgive all who trust in Christ. But I have often wondered if he might not have gone until death and then have discovered himself eternally lost had I not pressed the question into his heart that night!

In Dallas, Texas, in 1932 in an open air revival, a woman in a great crowd sent me a note. "Brother Rice, I have been a member of a church twenty-two years. Most of that time I have known I was never converted. I am not a child of God. But I cannot stand the shame of confessing that I have been in the church unsaved. It would break my husband's heart. He would think I have been a hypocrite, and perhaps I have."

I sent her word that both she and her husband had better have the shame over with now, that she had better confess her lost condition and turn to Christ for mercy and salvation now, rather than wait until she faced the Lord Jesus Christ and hear Him say, "I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

The next night she came weeping to trust in Christ. She told me that she had been in the church unsaved. She was baptized and has made a happy Christian.

In Fort Worth, Texas, some years ago in a great revival service, a young woman came weeping to say, "My name has been on the church roll, but I think it has never been written in the Lamb's book of life." How happy that she found it out in time!

I remember another who came to tell me, "I have been baptized, but now I want to be born again!"

Not Those Who Say, "Lord, Lord," but Those Who Do the will of God About Salvation Are Saved

In Matthew 7:21 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." The complaint that Jesus has against those who too late will seek to enter Heaven is that with their mouths they have honored the Lord, saying, "Lord, Lord," but such people have never done the will of the Father. Of course, this Scripture does not mean that only those who have perfectly done the will of the Father in all things are saved. That would mean that only those could be saved who were sinless and perfect. That would make of no effect the blood of Christ. That would be salvation by man, and not by God; salvation by works and not by God's grace. No, Jesus meant that those are saved who do the will of God concerning Christ and salvation - that is, those who trust Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God who died for our sins and so depend upon Him for forgiveness and salvation.

What works are pleasing to God? That question came up and was very clearly answered by our Saviour in John 6:28, 29:

"Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God ? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."

There it is! "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent"! Not those who do good works, who join churches, who pray, who tithe, who preach; no, no, those are not the will of God as a plan of salvation. The way to work the works of God is to believe on the Saviour that He has sent. The only way one can be saved is to trust the matter wholly with Jesus Christ. It is not prophesying, not casting out devils, not doing many wonderful works that opens the door of Heaven. It is trusting in Jesus Christ, who came into the world to die for sinners. That is God's plan of salvation. One who depends upon Christ and receives Him as Saviour thus does the will of the Father. It is God's will that all should believe on His Son and receive everlasting life. Those who expect to be saved any other way do not do the will of the Father.

A Refuge of Lies

The Prophet Isaiah brought this same warning to the people of Israel in his day.

"Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it." - Isa. 28:15-18.

"For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it, " - Isa. 28:20.

Are you, dear reader, like those who said, "We have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves"? Do you have a false hope of salvation? If you do, then God promises that "the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place." The scourge of God's

judgment will come, and you will be trodden down by it if you make lies your refuge! There is only one true hope of Heaven and that is in Jesus Christ, "a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." One who trusts in Him will never be ashamed, will never be left embarrassed and ruined by a false hope. Every other refuge is a refuge of lies, a delusion of Satan, a false hope that will lead you to the torment of the damned.

What Is Your False Hope?

There is one road to Heaven, a strait and narrow way. Also there is one road to Hell, according to the Bible, and it is a broad way, and many people go in thereat. But nevertheless it is essentially one. That must mean that whatever false hopes people have, they all center up in human goodness, human righteousness, human organizations. The narrow way is God's way, salvation offered freely through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ who died for sinners. Only those who trust Him are saved. It is a strait gate, and few there be that find it, out of the earth's population. But more people are willing to depend on themselves, on their righteousness, their good deeds, on their church, and so more people go in at the wide gate and travel the broad road that leads to destruction. Many who say, "Lord, Lord," are not saved because they do not do the will of the Father, that is, follow God's plan of salvation by simple trust in Jesus Christ.

Today when I asked a man, "Are you a Christian?" he answered rather hesitantly, "Well, I try to live it. I do the best I can."

But I assured him that trying to live a good life was not being a Christian . Remember the Pharisee who went up into the Temple to pray. Doubtless he lived a better life outwardly than any man who reads this. He fasted twice a week. He tithed all his possessions. He went to church. He prayed, even prayed in public. He was not unjust, not an adulterer. Really, he was a wonderfully good man - that is, outwardly. He was a mighty good man in men's sight; yet he went down to his house lost. And to Pharisees like that Jesus said: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Matt. 23:25-28).

To people like that the Lord Jesus will say, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Some people boast that they do the will of God, and they depend upon that for their salvation. But if it is good works that they are depending upon, they have not done the very first thing that is in the will of God for every sinner - they have not confessed themselves hopelessly lost and condemned sinners and trusted in Jesus Christ who died for sinners to be their Saviour and Redeemer. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:29).

All who trust in good deeds have too shallow a remedy. They patch up the outside of the life where men can see. The best they can they make a good appearance. But they cannot touch the filthy heart which is so black it must bring upon them the wrath of God. The trouble with the Pharisees was that they made clean the outside of the cup and the platter, but within they were full of extortion and excess. They appeared outwardly righteous unto men, but within they were full of hypocrisy and iniquity, Jesus said.

And so are you, poor sinner who reads this, if you are depending upon your own good life, your morality, your good deeds to get you to Heaven. God's Word says that your righteousness is only as filthy rags in His sight (Isa.64:6). You appear good to men, but you are not good. Your outward goodness covers over an unregenerate, wicked heart. That guilty heart must be cleansed, your sins must be forgiven, your nature must be changed before you can ever meet God in peace. Many there be that will say to Jesus, "Lord, I have done many good deeds in Your name. I have given to the poor, I have gone to church, I have treated my neighbors well. I have provided for my family. I have made a good name . I have paid my debts." But to all such who depend on their own righteousness, Jesus will say, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:23).

Men do not want to acknowledge their sin. Men do not want to admit that their case is hopeless without Christ. Men do not want to admit that their poor rotten hearts must be changed or they must spend eternity away from God.

That was the trouble with the Jews in the time of Paul. He said concerning them, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:1-3). That is the trouble. Instead of doing the will of God about salvation and trusting Jesus Christ and His blood which has already been shed to pay for every sin; instead of accepting God' s righteousness which is offered free and imputed to the believer, men go about to establish their own righteousness. Men want to get to Heaven on their own goodness. They want the credit for it. They want to exalt self instead of humbling self. They want to ignore sin instead of confessing it and condemning it. That is simply a part of the wicked rebellion of carnal man. The natural heart is not willing to confess its sin, not willing to bow the knee to Jesus Christ as man's only Saviour. The man who went to the wedding feast without a wedding garment was simply a picture of those who choose to depend upon their own righteousness instead of the pure righteousness of the sinless Saviour who died for us.

Depending on Church or Religion

It is a sad and shocking fact that many religious people are in Hell. Remember that there are many religions besides the true religion of Jesus Christ. Religion is no guarantee of salvation. The Pharisees were religious but they crucified Christ. They were wicked in their hearts though outwardly they appeared to men to be righteous. Remember that Cain was religious. He offered sacrifices, but God was not pleased with them. He prayed, but God did not hear favorably. So Christian Science, so-called, is a religion - a religion without confession of sin, a religion without blood atonement, a religion without the new birth. So Spiritualism is a religion a false religion, putting people at the mercy, often, of evil spirits. Many Catholics are very religious and very devout, but know nothing about peace in heart and the new birth. Some Catholics surely, we believe, have trusted in Christ alone for salvation, but how many there are who bow before idols and depend upon the church and its ordinances, on confession, on the prayers, on the intercession of Mary and the saints and of masses said by the priests! Clearly, one can be very religious but be utterly lost. Those who say, "Lord, Lord, open unto us," will be very religious, but religion does not keep people out of Hell. Saying prayers, going to church, giving money, being baptized, observing the Lord's supper - these are religious exercises but they do not save the soul.

It is a part of man's wicked self-righteousness to look to human ceremonies for salvation instead of to the blood of Christ alone. Man depends upon self - something he can do, something he can buy, something he can earn for salvation instead of depending upon the mercy of a great God who loves sinners.

You remember that Cain brought an offering, but it was an offering of the fruits of the ground, an offering after his own choice and not after God's choice. It had no blood in it. Cain did not believe in the blood atonement of Christ. He had no faith in God's Lamb who would take away the sin of the world. He is a type of all those religious men who depend upon religious ceremonies to save them, though their hearts are still black, and their sins are still unforgiven.

You say "But I was baptized." And what if you were? If you depended , upon baptism, you went down into the water a dry sinner, and came up a wet sinner. The water does not change the heart. Water will not save - it takes blood! Perhaps you were sprinkled as a baby, and someone else took your vows for you. Do you believe that could change the nature of your heart with all its inherent taint of sin? As a baby you were kept safe by God's mercy, but when you became an accountable sinner, you were lost, and nothing but the blood of Christ can save you. It may be that you were confirmed. It may be that some preacher or priest told you that your sins were forgiven. But I tell you now earnestly and prayerfully that you need more than the word of any man for this. You need the absolute certainty of God's own Word and the sweet assurance of the Holy Spirit within.

Someone else tells me, "Well, I am a Mason. If a man lives up to the rules of Masonry, he will get by." That is what Masonry tells you, but Masonry is a false religion. It teaches men they can save themselves by good deeds, but the Bible says, "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb.9:22). Peter said in Acts 4:12, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Doubtless there are multiplied thousands of lodge members in Hell. They may have been honest lodge members, moral and upright lodge members, but if they depended upon their lodge to save them, or their own good deeds, their works of righteousness, then they were utterly lost. I say to you again that not those who say, "Lord, Lord," will enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but those that do the will of the Father about salvation, that is, those who trust in Jesus Christ, God's Son whom He has sent into this world to save sinners.

"My Religion Might Do to Live By, but It Would Not Do to Die By!"

At Roosevelt, Oklahoma, in a big tent revival some years ago a young woman came to me deeply distressed and in tears wanting to know what she must do to be saved. I showed her that Christ had died for sinners, that her debt was all paid, that now she must confess herself a guilty sinner and look to the blood of Jesus Christ to cover all of her sins. I told her that now she had simply to receive Jesus and trust Him to have forgiveness of her sins and peace in her heart. But she began to say, "But Father told me ---." At first I thought she referred to her father, then learned that she meant the Catholic priest. He may have been ever so kind and sincere a man, as Catholic priests often are, and I mean no reflection on him when I tell the truth in this typical case. This girl had started out to be a good Catholic. She learned her prayers, and prepared for confirmation. She told me that the day she was to have been confirmed all confirmations were postponed by an order from the Bishop or some higher authority, for some reason. By the next Sunday she was desperately ill. A physician came, later others were called in consultation, and finally she was given up to die. They told her her time was limited. She told me that she was desperately afraid and

said, "I saw then that my religion might be good enough to live by, but it certainly would not do to die by. I prayed and asked God to give me another chance, and that I would learn what He wanted me to do and how to be saved." She said she told the Lord, "I am afraid, I am a sinner, and I am not fit to die, and I don't know how to be saved. But if You will get me well, I will learn how and get ready to meet God!"

God heard her prayer. She got well and immediately came to the tent revival seeking the Lord. I saw her speak with tears to her younger sister and heard her say, "Don't go at this thing lightly. This is serious. Your soul's eternal welfare hangs upon it. Get the thing settled right!"

How earnestly she listened, and how her eyes burned as her mind sought the truth! When she finally saw that the way was all opened, that her sins had been paid for on the cross, and that God was ready to receive her if she would receive Christ as her Substitute, her Saviour, her Redeemer, her Lord, how gladly she accepted Him! She followed Him in beautiful baptism to show the world openly that she claimed Him as Saviour.

Dear friend, your religion may suit you all right now, but I will tell you frankly, unless you are in the narrow way, unless you entered by the strait gate which is Christ Himself alone, then yours is a false religion. If you are depending on your good deeds, on baptism, on church membership or morality, then I earnestly plead with you to hear me, for you are doomed and lost!

Your life suits you, you say? You are very well satisfied with your self-righteousness? So was the man who had not on the wedding garment! He was well pleased with his own clothes, his own coverings, and he did not accept the wedding garment offered by the King. But I'll tell you now that when you face Jesus Christ you will be speechless as he was before the King. And all such will be cast out into the outer darkness where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

In Jesus' name, then make sure. Cast away every hope that you have leaned upon unless it be Jesus Christ alone. He died for sinners. He loves you. He said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). You need not be deceived.

You can be sure if you can find a verse of Scripture that gives the plain promise of God. Try God out on John 3:16, on John 3:18, or John 5:24. If you trust in Jesus Christ for mercy, then you already have everlasting life according to the plain Word of God.

How You Can Be Saved Forever and Know It

"What must I do to be saved?" you ask. Here is God's answer given in Acts 16:31: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Many are deceived, yet they should not be. It is not hard to be saved if one sincerely wishes to come God's way. To do the will of the Father means simply to trust Jesus Christ His Son who died to save you. He paid for all your sins. God is satisfied with the price Jesus paid, and offers free pardon to all who depend upon the Lord Jesus Christ for mercy. All through the Bible that blessed truth is given. Claim these blessed promises today:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." - John 3:16.

"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." - John 3:18

"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.

By turning to Christ in your heart and trusting in Him alone for forgiveness and a new heart and everlasting life, you do exactly what the Father requires you to do. That is simple. It can be done in a moment. But you must depend upon Christ to do the saving and not expect to be saved because of your good works or because you are "religious." Follow the example of the poor publican who prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner." If it is mercy you want, you can have it. If it is a sinner that you admit you are, then it was for you that Christ died. If you are willing to throw away your garments of self-righteousness, like poor, blind Bartimaeus cast away his garment when he arose and came to Jesus to be healed (Mark 10:50), then you surely will find a happy reception. The Lord Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost. He died to save sinners. I would make sure today that I was not depending on anything else in the world except that Christ died for me, and that God promised me forgiveness when I trusted Him.

Then I would so thoroughly surrender myself to the will of Christ that the Holy Spirit would give me full joy and assurance. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16). When you trust the Saviour, abandon yourself to Him. Claim Him openly, boldly. Follow Him anywhere He says. Be never content until in your heart there is the full assurance amounting to a certainty that your sins are forgiven and your soul is saved. That assurance will be brought by the Spirit of God who will shed abroad in your heart the love of God. He will bear witness with you. He is the Comforter. He will make Christ real. Today make sure you are saved! Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? Are you fully trusting in His grace this hour? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? Lay aside the garments that are stained with sin, And be washed in the blood of the Lamb; There's a fountain flowing for the soul unclean, O be washed in the blood of the Lamb!

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