

The Know-So Christian

by

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"I know whom I have believed"

- 1933 -

SUGAR CREEK BOOK ROOM Iowa

CHAPTER TWO -

SALVATION: AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY

Or Why Every One Must Become a Christian

It will not be necessary here to show every reason why a man should become a Christian. No one questions the happiness of the "know-so" Christian, nor the advantages mentally, morally, spiritually, socially, or even physically, that belong to the one who lives the Christian life.

But I shall deal directly here with the **absolute necessity** of turning to CHRIST and serving Him. In doing so I realize that I shall be charged with trying to frighten men into the kingdom of GOD. I shall have it said of me that I should "know better" than to expect an intelligent and enlightened age to be interested in a "gospel of fear."

But let me frankly say that I do **not** "know any better," and I **do** know that there is perhaps nothing more needed today than a message that will show the world its awful condition without CHRIST and the more awful consequences of rejecting Him.

I have heard men say that no genuine conversions ever resulted from fear of hell. But I have met many true Christians who were "scared into it" -- although men perhaps do not need to be "scared **into** it" so much as to be "scared **out**" of a life of sin.

Someone has said that "if there were more **preaching** of hell in our pulpits there would be less of it **lived** in our homes." True it is that one cannot fully realize his need of a Saviour who does not believe that there is something from which to be saved.

Men ridicule the plea of the evangelist who says to his audience, "Accept CHRIST now for you may die tonight." They advise him to say, "Accept CHRIST now for you must **live tomorrow**. Prepare to live, not to die." But I maintain that both messages are necessary.

The element of fear is a very essential thing in this reckless modern world. Why do we stop at a railroad crossing, when a train is about to rush by? Why do we call for the doctor when acute appendicitis has attacked us? Why do we make all haste to stop the leak in our fishing boat when we are far from land? Why do we run from a furious wild beast? Simply because we are aware of

serious danger to our well-being and **we are afraid!**

It takes little or no intelligence to boast that you do not fear the consequences of sin; and that you are not afraid to run the risk of dying without CHRIST.

Sam Jones once told of a man who in a partly drunken condition boasted to his companions that he would stand on the track and hurl the fast mail train down the embankment when it came flying through town. They, of course, laughed him to scorn, not dreaming that he would undertake such a foolhardy thing, but when they found the remnants of his body scattered along the railroad track next morning, they knew that he had attempted to make good his boast.

His lack of fear and his defiance of danger did not change the fact of certain death as a result of his folly! And, my dear friend, I would be faithful to you and warn you that **there is a Hell**; for the Bible says so. And your unbelief cannot change the fact nor keep you from going there.

It is indeed possible that Satan may take the **fear** of Hell out of you, even as he may blind you to the truths of Grace and Mercy.

All Men Are Sinners

It is absolutely necessary that you should become a Christian because there is no other way to get rid of your sin.

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." So reads I John 1:8.

It is becoming exceedingly unpopular to use the word "sin" nowadays, and in some circles it has long ago passed into disuse. Nevertheless it is a Scriptural term, and it is plainly stated in Romans 3:23, "**All have sinned.**" Other words are used for sin in the Bible, such as "iniquity," "transgression," "evil," and "unbelief." In this modern world those who seek for more gentle terms use such words as "peccadillo," "mistake," "error," "foible," "disease," "principle of evil," etc.

But regardless of the different names or phrases which are used to describe or minimize the evil acts or thoughts, they all belong to the same big family whose surname is "sin"; and unless we accept CHRIST as our Saviour we shall die **in** our sins. He Himself says that if we do not believe that He is the Son of GOD we **shall** die in our sin (John 8:24). He alone is the One through whom we obtain forgiveness; for forgiveness is based on the atonement; and it is by the blood which He shed at Calvary that we are cleansed from unrighteousness (I John 1:9).

In CHRIST Alone There Is Life

A flippant Indian youth once interrupted an evangelist saying, "You tell about the burden of sin. I feel none. How heavy is it? Eighty pounds? Ten pounds?"

The preacher replied, "Tell me, would a corpse feel a four hundred pound weight if you laid it upon him?"

"No, because it's dead," replied the youth.

The preacher then said, "*That spirit, too, is dead which feels no load of sin*"!

I John 5:12 has this startling statement, "**He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.**" This verse coupled with Paul's message in Ephesians 2:1, presents to us the awful truth that men who are not Christians are **spiritually dead!**

You see, then, why you are so unconcerned about the things of CHRIST and why there seems to be no love in your heart for the Bible or prayer or the work of winning men from sin.

Spiritual death is not determined by the degree of corruption manifested; for a corpse of thirty hours is just as dead as one of thirty days. Even so, a well-dressed, outwardly-respectable man, without CHRIST, is just as dead spiritually as the poor, sin-besmirched, whiskey-soaked, bloated faced, foul-mouth wretch of the slums! "**He that hath not the Son hath not life.**"

CHRIST the Only Way

All roads do not "lead to Rome," and all roads do not and never did lead to Heaven!

The average uninstructed man of today is wandering in a veritable labyrinth of spiritual darkness. He may think that all he needs to do is to start off in the general direction of what appears to him to be the right and he will ultimately attain to the Celestial City!

Only yesterday a young man said to me, "Oh, well, it doesn't matter much whether a man belongs to this church or that, etc. We are all working for the same place."

We are **not** all working for the same place or in order to get to the same place. Long ago I learned that all the works in the world could never take me to Heaven. For it is "**to him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly**" that faith is counted for **righteousness**" (Romans 4:5).

CHRIST left us no room for doubt as to the way to Heaven. There is no excuse for the many opinions and notions about how to be saved.

Listen to His own words, understandable in only one way and impregnable to all attempts at refutation: "**I am the Way . . . No man cometh unto the Father but by me**" (John 14:5). We know of course that the Father is in Heaven; for the so-called Lord's Prayer begins with this phrase, "**Our Father which art in heaven.**"

We see therefore that in order to be saved we must have CHRIST; for He is **the** Way. We are not left to do as we please but **required** to take the only way or else miss Heaven altogether. There is no value to be gained by noncompliance. An attitude of stubbornness can be the means of closing forever the door of salvation against us; for a closed heart against Him here will mean a closed Heaven against us hereafter!

Individual Responsibility

"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12). The Christian shall give an account of his **work**, his sin having been accounted for by CHRIST at the Cross. But every unsaved man shall give an account of himself; not only for his works but for his attitude toward JESUS CHRIST.

CHRIST Will Be Judge

CHRIST Himself will be JUDGE in the day of judgment of unbelievers, as is revealed in Acts 17:31. Each man shall give an account of himself to GOD; and woe unto the man who, having scorned and rejected the Son of GOD on earth, shall meet Him one day as a JUDGE! Man has his choice of meeting CHRIST either in grace or in judgment.

I cannot believe that our Lord will take any delight in saying, "**Depart from me; I know you not**"; yet He can do no other than to permit the man who has chosen to live a life of sin to go to the place for which he has prepared himself. It is only fair and right for the protection of those who go to Heaven that evil and ungodly men shall not be allowed to enter there.

Eternal Sin -- Eternal Punishment

I cannot tell you what shall be the exact state of the lost throughout eternity except that they are "**punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power**" (II Thessalonians 1:8-9). It is extremely likely that there will be a degree of punishment; and each one having a body that will be impervious to flames, explains how he can exist forever in literal fire. It is not merely the fires of remembrance, as some suggest, and of the stinging, biting qualms of conscience, but it is the literal fiery **hell** as the Word of GOD depicts.

You may say, "I cannot see how GOD can permit a man to go to eternal torment for a few sins." But it is not for one or a few sins that man goes to Hell; but for a rejection of the only way of salvation [CHRIST]. There is no reason to think that after death a man will be any more willing to serve GOD than before. His associates in Hell will be as rebellious as he and with him will **continue on in sin! And continued sin, means continued punishment.** Dr. Rayburn once said, "**There will be eternal punishment, because there will be eternal sinning!**"

GOD's Goodness

Again you may say, "GOD is too good to damn anyone." And I entirely agree with you. He is too good! But listen, dear reader, what can He do with you if you will not accept His offers of mercy and His pleading with you to turn from your sin? I maintain that GOD is too good to put you into Heaven where you would only suffer forever in the presence of His holiness and goodness. Your nature would not fit there. For "**the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be**" (Romans 8:7).

GOD is also too good to permit the murderers, drunkards, liars, thieves, adulterers, gamblers, and others to spend eternity in the same place with those whom He has redeemed. For in that case Heaven *would not be Heaven*. It would not be as safe a place as the streets of some of our great, wicked cities.

"Hell," said Dr. Ironside, "is GOD's well-ordered prison house."

Death does not change man from bad to good. It is faith in CHRIST that does that.

Nothing to Do to Be Lost!

The natural man does not have to do anything to be lost for he is **already lost**.

John 3:18 declares that "**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.**"

A young man said to me a few days ago, "I don't see why a man is lost just because of the sin of Adam." I then had the opportunity to tell him of CHRIST who came to atone for **all** sin and to save us not only from our inherited sinful nature but our actual acts of sin. His GOD, then, responsible for the lost condition of one who absolutely refuses to be saved?

It is not a question of the fairness or unfairness of GOD, but whether you are fair to yourself in rejecting His offer to forgive your sins, and to give you victory over your inherited sinful nature.

No, you do not have to do anything to be lost. For "**all we like sheep have gone astray**" (Isaiah 53:6).

All arguments and notions which contradict the plain teaching of the Word about the absolute necessity of accepting CHRIST, are just as chaff before the wind.

GOD's Word says, "**Ye must be born again,**" and that settles it! If He says so, then it is so and we must comply.

But He will never force us to turn from sin. We must do so of our own free will. For willing service is the only kind that is acceptable.

Do you not hear Him calling, "**Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?**" (Ezekiel 33:11).

~ end of chapter 2 ~
