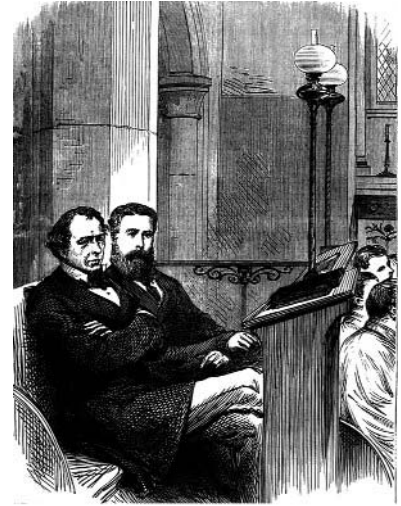


Lost in the Church!

by J. L. Stauffer
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What a startling phrase! "Lost" is a chilling word to anyone who has had the experience. Our emotions are stirred and whole communities and nations are aroused when some child strays away in the wilderness, or some daring aviator is lost in the forests of Canada, or the frozen ice fields of the north. Thousands of men will volunteer to search for the child, nations will send rescue planes, spend millions of dollars, and forfeit additional lives to rescue the stranded aviators. But where is the interest and concern to be found for the multitudes who are LOST in the Church; lost church members, lost in the very place where their presence should be a testimony concerning their salvation from sin?

The Samaritan woman of John 4 was a spectacular character, lost in sin. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, while Levites, were lost in rebellion and gainsaying against the order of God. Zaccheus was a Jewish tax-gatherer and was lost with his political office. Cain had a less religion, was a servant of the evil one and was lost because of his rejection of the divinely appointed means of approach to God. The prodigal son was lost in the far country, but the eldest brother, by his revealed attitude, was lost under the home roof.

The saddest illustration of lost men in the Scriptures, however, are Judas Iscariot and Simon the sorcerer. Judas Iscariot was a personal disciple and apostle of our Lord. Judas is an illustration of one who did not continue in the grace of God and who later went into apostasy and died without hope. The awful sin of covetousness was used by the devil to trip Judas and eventually he yielded to the sin that culminated in selling his Lord for fifteen dollars. ... Judas is an illustration of a man lost under the personal ministry of the Son of God Himself.

The question of greatest importance to everyone is: "Is thy heart right with God?" It is evident that many people will discover the sad fact that they are lost after it is too late to get saved. Sad will be the awakening when they discover they have trusted in a

broken reed, instead of the of Christ. You may have had Christian parents, but that will not pass you through the gates of pearl without Christ. You may observe the ordinances of the household of God, which are right and proper for saved people, but it will not avail you anything if your sins are unforgiven, and you are devoid of salvation.

You may deny yourself of many worldly pleasures and pay all your financial obligations to the world and to the church, but this is no passport to glory without the grace of God.

You may be a Sunday school teacher, a church worker, a class leader and spend much of your time in Christian activity and yet not know the Lord. "Many shall say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name done many wonderful works?' And then I will profess unto them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity'" (Matt. 7:22,23).

You cannot know the joy of salvation if you have never known the horror of being LOST. "The Son of man came to seek that which was lost" (Luke 19:19). No one but a lost one can have any claim on the grace of God. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." If you have never realized your sinful state, you have no salvation. Christ can do nothing for you. Have you confessed your sin? Has this confession led you to make restitution as far as humanly possible? Has the world lost its attraction to your soul? Does Jesus Christ have the pre-eminence in your life? Do you know that old things have passed away in your life and all things have become new? Does the Word of God feed your soul? Do you have a desire for it? When you hear others taking the name of your Lord in vain, does it send a chill of horror over your soul? Have you found the old companionship unhealthy for the new Christian experience? Do you long to go to the house of God to worship? Does it grieve your heart to see professed Christians going to a ball game, dance, swimming

pool, social party, or some other worldly attraction? Do you have a desire to see others saved? Do you witness to others about the Christian experience you now enjoy, or are you blind to win souls for Christ? In other words, are you saved and do you know it because you have the inner witness of the Spirit, the love for the brethren, the peace of God within, and the conscience void of offense toward God and man?

Dear reader, it is highly important that we “know in whom we have believed.” The “signs of the times”

appear to forecast the speedy return of our Lord. “Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” Will you be ready for this event, or will you, as an unsaved church member be lost in the church? To be lost in the church when finds you, or the Lord returns, means to be forever lost. Salvation is too precious, the Saviour too loving, eternity too long, and the opportunities to be saved too numerous to justify anyone going on in an unsaved condition. “Now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation.” □