



THE BIBLE STANDS

*The Bible stands though the hills may tumble,
It will firmly stand when the earth shall crumble;
I will plant my feet on its firm foundation,
For the Bible stands.*

Death - Something to think about

In one of the great art galleries, there stands a large bronze bas-relief, called "The Sculptor, the Angel of Death." It portrays a young ambitious sculptor, busy working on a block of marble. Already he has carved into it the life-like face of a man, and he is anxious to complete this statue which the world will acclaim as his greatest.

But, with his chisel carefully placed and an uplifted mallet ready to strike, the angel of death has suddenly appeared, touches him on the shoulder, and bids him stop. With a look of surprise and dismay, he realizes that that sculpture—and all his other work—will now end. For the young man is about to die.

Scientists tell us they cannot measure data indicating relationships with the Creator. Yet there is a lot of it available, and it clearly points in one direction. For example, which group of people are the most interested in preserving the life of the unborn? It is the Christians. Other groups, in general, are far less concerned about whether abortions are carried out. Which group generally has happier lives? It is the Christians, and it matters not whether theirs is a life of poverty or wealth. Which group has the greatest peace of heart? It is the Christians. Which group commits the fewest felonies and major crimes? It is the Christians.

Everyone knows that adultery, crime, or murder by a Christian pastor is far more likely to be given space in the media than if committed by an atheist. Why is this so? It is the rarity of the event which makes it so newsworthy. As usual, it is not the dog biting the man which is published, but the man biting the dog. A genuine Christian does not do improper acts as often as the average person.

So the facts about Christianity can, indeed, be quantified. They are quite obvious. It is the believers in, and worshipers of, the Creator God which consistently have contented, happier, more caring lives. Problems enter the lives of all, but it is the Creationists who are the most peaceful, the most obedient to right principles, and the most stalwart in their defense.

For a few minutes, let us gather together some data on how men face oncoming death. With an open mind, consider the facts for yourself. Except for unusual divine intervention, we will all die. That includes you. Within a few years, you will be dead. The way a man faces death is but a reflection of his entire way of life and all his past experiences. A man living for himself is terrorized by the approach of death, but a man who has personally experienced the presence of God realizes that death is not an enemy to be feared.

We are not here discussing something imaginary. This issue consistently bears out the fact that it is the leading atheists, the most blatant haters of God, who are the most terrorized as death approaches. In contrast, as we will see below, those who have loved and served the God of heaven have an amazingly peaceful certainty that the future will be far better than their present life.

It is quite obvious that God exists. He created the earth, sea, and sky. He also made us. We can only be happy as we love Him and obey His laws. In doing so, we become ennobled with better principles, live far happier lives, and are ready when death nears.

Yet, although we rarely mention it to others, this is exactly what we want to know: how to face death.

A group of American soldiers were gathered, for the last time for entertainment, in England. The next morning they were to ship out. One man stood to thank their British hosts; and, then, as an afterthought, said to them: "Tomorrow morning we will cross the channel to France. There we will go to the trenches, and very possibly, of course, to death. Can any of our friends here tell us how to die?" There was silence in the room.

When it comes, death frequently comes suddenly and unexpectedly. It is today that we must prepare for what will come as a certainty for tomorrow. The preparation can indeed be made. The following pages may be among the most important you will ever read.

On a dark afternoon in September 1583, in a stormy sea near the Azores, the Golden Hind, commanded by Sir Walter Raleigh, sailed close to the Squirrel, a smaller vessel commanded by Sir Humphrey Gilbert. The captain of the Golden Hind cried out to Gilbert, who was sitting in the stern of his vessel with a book open in his hand, and urged him, for his safety, to come aboard the larger vessel. This Gilbert refused to do, saying he would not leave his companions in the Squirrel. Then Raleigh heard him call out over the waves, "Heaven is as near by sea as by land."

Conditions rapidly worsened; and, at midnight that night, those on the Golden Hind saw the lights on the smaller vessel suddenly go out. And, in that moment, Gilbert and his ship were swallowed up by the dark, raging sea.

Death can come suddenly for every one of us. But how many are ready when death draws near? Here is how Christians died:

On her deathbed, Queen Victoria told those around her that she loved God and was His little child, so she was ready to die. Then she called for the hymn to be sung:

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
"Let me hide myself in Thee."

For decades she had ruled the British Empire; but, when death approached, all she had was God.

And that is the consistent pattern with those who have made peace with their Creator and love and serve Him. Here is how Christians die, as revealed in their dying words:

Brownlow North (1840), a profligate nobleman who became a preacher: " 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.' That is the verse on which I am now dying. One wants no more."

John Nelson Darby (1882): "Beyond the grave comes heaven. Well, it will be strange to find myself in Heaven, but it won't be a strange Christ—One I've known these many years. I am glad He knows me. I have a deep peace, which you know."

Charles Wesley (1788), author of over 4,000 published hymns: "I shall be satisfied with Thy likeness. Satisfied!"

Charles Dickens (1870), the famous author: "I commit my soul to the mercy of God, through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ."

John Quincy Adams (1848): "This is the last of earth. I am content!"

Benjamin Parsons: "My head is resting very sweetly on three pillows: infinite power, infinite wisdom, and infinite love."

Henry Moorhouse (1880): "If it were God's will to raise me up [from this sickbed], I should like to preach from the text, John 3:16. Praise be to the Lord."

Earl Cairns (1885), lord high chancellor of England: "God loves me and cares for me. He has pardoned all my sins for Christ's sake, and I look forward to the future with no dread."

Bishop Joseph Lightfoot (1889), after having several Scriptures read to him, and asked what he had in mind. In utter calmness of spirit, he replied: "I am feeding on a few great thoughts."

Sidney Cooper (1902), a member of the Royal Academy of Science in London: "I have full faith in Thy atonement, and I am confident of Thy help. Thy precious blood I fully rely on. Thou art the source of my comfort. I have no other. I want no other."

Lord V.C. Roberts (1914), who died in France while telling those gathered by him of the importance of their studying the Bible: "I ask you to put your trust in God. You will find, in this Book, guidance when you are in health; comfort, when you are in sickness; and strength, when you are in adversity."

Catherine Booth (1890), wife of the founder of the Salvation Army: "The waters are rising, but so am I. I am not going under, but over. Do not be concerned about dying. Go on living well; the dying will be right."

William Pitt (1778), Earl of Chatham, statesman, orator, and prime minister: "I throw myself on the mercy of God, through the merits of Christ."

Edward Perronet, pastor and author: "Glory to God in the heights of His divinity! Glory to God in the depths of His humanity! Glory to God in His all-sufficiency! Into His hands I commend my spirit."

Augustus Toplady (1778), preacher and author of the hymn, "Rock of Ages": "The consolations of God to such an unworthy wretch are so abundant that He leaves me nothing to pray for but a continuance of them. I enjoy heaven already in my soul."

Sir Walter Raleigh (1922), English admiral, before his beheading: "It matters little how the head lies if the heart be right. Why doest thou not strike?"

Countess of Huntingdon (1791): "I have the hope which inspired the dying malefactor. And now my work is done; I have nothing to do but go to the grave and thence to my Father."

Robert Burns (1796), the Scottish poet: "I have but a moment to speak to you, my dear. Be a good man; be virtuous; be religious. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to be here."

John Wesley (1791): "The best of all: God is with us!"

Lady Glenorchy: "If this is dying, it is the pleasantest thing imaginable."

John Bacon (1799), eminent English sculptor, whose monument of Lord Chatham stands in Westminster Abbey: "What I was as an artist seemed to be of some importance while I lived; but what I really was as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only thing of importance to me now."

Francis Ridley Havergal, songwriter. After requesting a friend to read to her Isaiah 42, she uttered these nine words, after verse 6, and died: "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee. Called-held-kept! I can go home on that!"

George Washington (1799), an earnest Christian and the first president of the United States: "Doctor, I am dying, but I am not afraid to die."

John Huss, Bohemian reformer and martyr, asked at the last moment by the Duke of Bavaria to recant: "What I taught with my lips, I seal with my blood."

Lady Powerscourt (1800): "One needs a great many Scriptures to live by, but the only Scripture that a person needs to die by is 1 John 1:7, and that verse never was sweeter to me than at this moment."

Sir Walter Scott (1832). The famous author was talking with his son-in-law: "What shall I read?" said Lockhart. "Can you ask?" The dying man replied, "There is only one Book."

David Brainerd (1747), pioneer missionary to the American Indians: "I do not go to heaven to be advanced, but to give honour to God. It is no matter where I shall be stationed in heaven, whether I have a high or low seat there, but to live and please and glorify God. My heaven is to please God and glorify Him, and give all to Him, and to be wholly devoted to His glory."

John Pawson, minister: "I know I am dying, but my deathbed is a bed of roses. I have no thorns planted upon my dying pillow. In Christ, heaven is already begun!"

William Wilberforce (1833), member of Parliament who helped eliminate slavery in England: "My affections are so much in heaven that I can leave you all without a regret; yet I do not love you less, but God more."

Adoniram Judson (1850): American missionary to Burma: "I go with the gladness of a boy bounding away from school. I feel so strong in Christ."

Captain Hedley Vicars (1855): "The Lord has kept me in perfect peace and made me glad with the light of His countenance. In the Lord Jesus I find all I want of happiness and enjoyment."

Sir Henry Havelock (1857), when felled by an attack of malignant cholera and told that he could not survive, calmly replied: "I have prepared for this for forty years," and then he added to those around him: "Prepare to meet thy God!"

The Apostle Paul (A.D. 66): "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness" (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

Longfellow: "For the Christian, the grave itself is but a covered bridge leading from light to light, through a brief darkness."

Polycarp (A.D. 155), disciple of the Apostle John, at his own martyrdom: "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He has done me nothing but good. How could I curse Him, My Lord and Saviour?"

Susanna Wesley, mother of John and Charles Wesley: "Children, when I am gone, sing a song of praise to God."

George Whitefield (1770), English evangelist: "Lord Jesus, I am weary in Thy work, but not of Thy work. If I have not yet finished my course, let me go and speak for Thee once more in the fields, seal the truth, and come home to die."

Philipp Melanchthon (1560), after several passages of Scripture were read to him by his son-in-law, he was asked if he would have anything else: "Nothing else but heaven!"

Preston: "Blessed by God! Though I change my place, I shall not change my company."

Samuel Rutherford (1615): "Mine eyes shall see my Redeemer. He has pardoned, loved, and washed me, and given me joy unspeakable and full of glory. I feed on manna. Glory, glory, glory to my Creator and Redeemer forever!"

Francis Bacon (1626), Lord Chancellor of England: "The sweetest life in this world is piety, virtue, and honesty."

John Bunyan (1688), author of *Pilgrim's Progress*: "Weep not for me, but for yourselves. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, through the mediation of His blessed Son, receives me, though a sinner. We shall meet to sing the new song and remain everlastingly happy."

Richard Baxter (1691), the English martyr: "I have pain, but have peace. I have peace!"

Ann Hasseltine Judson (1826), missionary to Burma and wife of Adoniram Judson: "Oh, the happy day will soon come when we shall meet all our friends who are now scattered—we meet to part no more in our heavenly Father's house."

Abbott: "Glory to God! After the grave, heaven will open before me!"

John Knox: "Live in Christ, and the flesh need not fear death."

Everett: "Glory, glory, glory!" His expression was repeated for 25 minutes, and only ceased with life itself.

John A. Lyth: "Can this be death? Why, it is better than living! Tell them I die happy in Jesus!"

Martin Luther: "Our God is the God from whom cometh salvation. God is the Lord by whom we escape death! Into Thy hands I commit my spirit. God of truth, Thou hast redeemed me!"

Margaret Prior: "Eternity rolls before me like a sea of glory!"

Goodwin: "Ah! Is this dying? How have I dreaded, as an enemy, this smiling friend!"

Martha McCrackin: "How bright the room! How full of angels!"

Mary Frances: "Oh, that I could tell you what joy I possess! The Lord doth shine with such power upon my soul!"

Sir David Brewster (1868), scientist and inventor of the kaleidoscope: "I will see Jesus; I shall see Him as He is! I have had the light for many years. Oh how bright it is! I feel so safe and satisfied!"

Michael Faraday (1867), chemist, electrical engineer, and leading British scientist, as he neared death, replied to a scientist who asked him what he would do in heaven: " 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him.' I shall be with Christ, and that is enough."

When a journalist interjected and questioned him as to his speculations about a life after death, he said, "Speculations! I know nothing about speculations. I'm resting on certainties. 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' and because He lives, I shall live also."

David Brainerd (1747), a well-known missionary in the American Colonies: "I am going into eternity, and it is sweet to me to think of eternity; the endlessness of it makes it sweet. But oh! What shall I say of the future of the wicked! The thought is too dreadful!"

Daniel Webster (1852), the well-known orator and legislator, had William Cowper's hymn read to him: "There is a fountain filled with blood, Drawn from Immanuel's veins." Then he read the last stanza: "Then in a nobler, sweeter song, I'll sing Thy power to save. When this poor lisp'ng, stam'ring tongue lies silent in the grave . . ."

At this, Webster, one of the most powerful speakers in American history, replied, "Amen! Amen! Amen!"

Owen, the Puritan, lay on his deathbed, and his secretary was writing a letter, in his name, to a friend: "I am still in the land of the living," he wrote, and read what he had written to Owen.

"No, please do not write that," Owen said. "I am yet in the land of the dying; but, later, I will be in the land of the living!"

On November 20, 1847, in Nice, France, Henry Frances Lyte, a retired pastor of the Church of England died. He had spent his life working in the slums of London, helping people. After his death, his family found a paper he had written during those last days. It is now a hymn sung around the world:

"Abide with me: fast falls the eventide.

"The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide!

"When other helpers fail and comforts flee,

"Help of the helpless, O abide with me."

Benjamin Franklin (1790) wrote the following epitaph for his own tomb. It is there today: "The Body of Benjamin Franklin, Printer. Like the Cover of an Old Book, Its Contents Torn Out and Stripped of Its Lettering and Gilding, Lies Here, Food for Worms. Yet the Work Itself Shall Not Be Lost; for It will, as He Believed, Appear Once More in a New and More Beautiful Edition, Corrected and Amended by the Author."

The epitaph on the grave in Canterbury, England, of Henry Alford (1861), the hymn writer is this: "The inn of a pilgrim journeying to Jerusalem."

A 22-year-old Dutch patriot wrote the following letter to his parents before he was executed by a Nazi firing squad, for the crime of trying to escape with his three companions to England:

"In a little while at five o'clock it is going to happen, and that is not so terrible . . . On the contrary, it is beautiful to be in God's strength. God has told us that He will not forsake us if only we pray to Him for support. I feel so strongly my nearness to God; I am fully prepared to die . . . I have confessed all my sins to Him and have become very quiet. Therefore do not mourn, but trust in God and pray for strength . . . Give me a firm handshake. God's will be done . . . We are courageous. Be the same. They can only take our bodies. Our souls are in God's hands . . . May God bless you all. Have no hate. I die without hatred. God rules everything."

Pilgrim's Progress is generally considered one of the greatest books ever written by a follower of Christ. In it, the two pilgrims, Christian and Hopeful, finally received their summons and came down to the river. But, when they saw how deep, wide, swift, and dark were its waters, they were stunned.

Then they were told, "You must go through or you cannot come at the gate." Then they asked if the waters were all of a depth, and the answer was given: "You shall find it deeper or shallower as you believe in the King of the place."

Then they went into the water, and Christian began to sink, and said: "I sink in deep waters; the billows go over my head; all His waves go over me."

But Hopeful answered, "Be of good cheer, my brother: I feel the bottom, and it is good."

And with that Christian broke out with a loud voice, "Oh, I see him again; and he tells me, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.'"

Then they both took courage, and the enemy was after that as still as a stone until they were gone over. They had passed through the grave to the glorious resurrection day beyond.

Little Kenneth was very sick. He felt that he was not going to get well. Turning toward his mother, who sat by his bedside, he asked, "Mother, what is it like to die?"

Mother was filled with grief, and she knew not how to answer him. She replied, "Kenneth, I must go to the kitchen. I'll be right back." Hurrying there, she prayed, "Lord, show me how to answer Kenneth's question." Immediately, she knew how to express it.

Returning to Kenneth, Mother said, "Kenneth, you know how you have often played hard and gotten very tired in the evening? Then you have come into my room and climbed upon my bed and gone to sleep. Later your father carried you in his arms and put you in your own bed. In the morning you have awakened and found yourself in your own room, without knowing how you got there."

Kenneth said, "Yes, Mother, I know that."

"Well, Kenneth", Mother continued, "death is something like that for God's children. Jesus spoke of death as sleep. God's children go to sleep when they die. Later, at the resurrection, they will arise and be with Christ forever. Heaven in a wonderful place, Kenneth!"

Then the boy smiled and said, "Mother, I won't be afraid to die now. I'll just go to sleep and, later, wake up and be with Jesus forever. I know God will take care of me."

Henry Van Dyke wrote this very accurate statement: "Remember that what you possess in this world will be found at the day of your death and belong to someone else; what you are will be yours forever."

All that you own will someday be given to another, but your character—what you are—will determine your future destiny.

But now the entire picture changes. We leave the deathbeds of the Christians and visit the deathbeds of the atheists.

We have observed how men and women who have given themselves to God—who earnestly love and obey Him—have died. They confidently declared at the portals of death, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me" (Psalm 23:4).

The Apostle Paul said, "To die is gain" (Philippians 1:21) and "O death, where is thy sting?" (1 Corinthians 15:55). But to so many others death is a fearsome, dreadful thing.

Aristotle wrote: "Death is a dreadful thing, for it is the end!"

John Donne, the English author, wrote: "Death is a bloody conflict, and no victory at last; a tempestuous sea, and no harbor at last; a slippery height, and no footing; a desperate fall, and no bottom!"

Rousseau, the infidel, cried, "No man dares to face death without fear."

Robert Ingersoll, the infidel, when standing at the grave of his brother, said, "Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive, in vain, to look beyond the height. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word."

After the death of Alexander the Great, one of his generals, Ptolemy Philadelphus, inherited Egypt and lived a selfish life amid wealth and luxury. As he grew old, he was haunted by the fear of death, and even sought, in the lore of Egyptian priests, the secret of eternal life. One day, seeing a beggar lying content in the sun, Ptolemy said, "Alas, that I was not born one of these!"

We shall discover that the last words of the atheists are far different than those who love and honor their Creator. For example, when Phineas T. Barnum, the famous circus showman of yesteryear died in his 82nd year, his last words were a question about the big show's gate receipts at their latest Madison Square Garden performance. Then he was gone!

But, for most atheists, their concerns are far more dramatic. Here are the dying words of atheists:

Voltaire, the most influential atheist of Europe in his day, cried out with his dying breath: "I am abandoned by God and man; I shall go to hell! I will give you half of what I am worth, if you will give me six month's life."

Honore Mirabeau, a leading political organizer of the French Revolution: "My sufferings are intolerable: I have in me a hundred years of life, but not a moment's courage. Give me more laudanum, that I may not think of eternity! O Christ, O Jesus Christ!"

Mazarin, French cardinal and advisor to kings: "O my poor soul! What will become of thee? Wither wilt thou go?"

Severus, Roman emperor who caused the death of thousands of Christians: "I have been everything, and everything is nothing!"

Thomas Hobbes, the political philosopher and skeptic who corrupted some of England's great men: "If I had the whole world, I would give anything to live one day. I shall be glad to find a hole to creep out of the world at. I am about to take a fearful leap in the dark!"

Caesar Borgia: "I have provided, in the course of my life, for everything except death; and now, alas! I am to die, although entirely unprepared!"

Sir Thomas Scott, chancellor of England: "Until this moment, I thought there was neither God nor hell; now I know and feel that there are both, and I am doomed to perdition by the just judgment of the Almighty!"

Edward Gibbon, author of Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire: "All is dark and doubtful!"

Sir Francis Newport, the head of an English infidel club to those gathered around his deathbed: "You need not tell me there is no God, for I know there is one, and that I am in His presence! You need not tell me there is no hell. I feel myself already slipping. Wretches, cease your idle talk about there being hope for me! I know I am lost forever! Oh, that fire! Oh, the insufferable pangs of hell!"

M.F. Rich: "Terrible horrors hang over my soul! I have given my immortality for gold; and its weight sinks me into a hopeless, helpless Hell!"

Thomas Paine, the leading atheistic writer in the American colonies: "I would give worlds if I had them, that The Age of Reason had never been published. O Lord, help me! Christ, help me! . . . No, don't leave; stay with me! Send even a child to stay with me; for I am on the edge of Hell here alone. If ever the Devil had an agent, I have been that one."

Napoleon Bonaparte, the French emperor who brought death to millions, to satisfy his selfish plans: "I die before my time, and my body will be given back to the earth. Such is the fate of him who has been called the great Napoleon. What an abyss between my deep misery and the eternal kingdom of Christ!"

Aldamont, the infidel: "My principles have poisoned my friend; my extravagance has beggared my boy; my unkindness has murdered my wife. And is there another hell yet ahead?"

John Wilkes Booth, who assassinated Abraham Lincoln: "Useless! Useless! The terrors before me!"

Thomas Carlyle: "I am as good as without hope, a sad old man gazing into the final chasm."

David Strauss, leading representative of German rationalism, after spending a lifetime erasing belief in God from the minds of others: "My philosophy leaves me utterly forlorn! I feel like one caught in the merciless jaws of an automatic machine, not knowing at what time one of its great hammers may crush me!"

Tallyrand, one of the most cunning French political leaders of the Napoleonic era. On a paper found at his death were these words: "Behold eighty-three passed away! What cares! What agitation! What anxieties! What ill will! What sad complications! And all without other results except great fatigue of mind and body, a profound sentiment of discouragement with regard to the future and disgust with regard to the past!"

Some 15 years before his death, Mahatma Gandhi wrote: "I must tell you in all humility that Hinduism, as I know it, entirely satisfies my soul, fills my whole being, and I find a solace in the Bhagavad and Upanishads."

Just before his death, Gandhi wrote: "My days are numbered. I am not likely to live very long—perhaps a year or a little more. For the first time in fifty years I find myself in the slough of despond. All about me is darkness; I am praying for light."

"What did you do to our daughter?" asked a Moslem woman, whose child had died at 16 years of age. "We did nothing," answered the missionary. "Oh, yes, you did," persisted the mother. "She died smiling. Our people do not die like that." The girl had found Christ and believed on Him a few months before. Fear of death had gone. Hope and joy had taken its place.

In a Newsweek interview with Svetlana Stalin, the daughter of Josef Stalin, she told of her father's death: "My father died a difficult and terrible death . . . God grants an easy death only to the just . . . At what seemed the very last moment he suddenly opened his eyes and cast a glance over everyone in the room. It was a terrible glance, insane or perhaps angry . . . His left hand was raised, as though he were pointing to something above and bringing down a curse on us all. The gesture was full of menace . . . The next moment he was dead."

Charles IX was the French king who, urged on by his mother, gave the order for the massacre of the Huguenots, in which 15,000 souls were slaughtered in Paris alone and 100,000 in other sections of France, for no other reason than that they loved Christ. The guilty king suffered miserably for years after that event. He finally died, bathed in blood bursting from his veins. To his physicians he said in his last hours: "Asleep or awake, I see the mangled forms of the Huguenots passing before me. They drop with blood. They point at their open wounds. Oh! that I had spared at least the little infants at the breast! What blood! I know not where I am. How will all this end? What shall I do? I am lost forever! I know it. Oh, I have done wrong."

William E. Henley, an atheist, wrote a famous poem; the last two lines have often been quoted:

"Out of the night that covers me,
"Black as the pit from pole to pole,
"I thank whatever gods may be.
"Beyond this place of wrath and tears
"Looms but the horror of the shade;
"And yet the menace of the years
"Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.
"It matters not how strait the gate,
"How charged with punishment the scroll,
"I am the master of my fate;
"I am the captain of my soul."

Men who have been bold in their defiance of God have lauded Henley's poem, but most of them were not aware that William Henley later committed suicide.

Few men in Europe have tried to eradicate the Bible and the knowledge of God from the minds of the people as did the French infidel, Voltaire. The Christian physician who attended Voltaire, during his last illness, later wrote about the experience:

"When I compare the death of a righteous man, which is like the close of a beautiful day, with that of Voltaire, I see the difference between bright, serene weather and a black thunderstorm. It was my lot that this man should die under my hands. Often did I tell him the truth. 'Yes, my friend,' he would often say to me, 'you are the only one who has given me good advice. Had I but followed it, I should not be in the horrible condition in which I now am. I have swallowed nothing but smoke. I have intoxicated myself with the incense that turned my head. You can do nothing for me. Send me an insane doctor! Have compassion on me—I am mad!'"

"I cannot think of it without shuddering. As soon as he saw that all the means he had employed to increase his strength had just the opposite effect, death was constantly before his eyes. From this moment, madness took possession of his soul. He expired under the torments of the furies."

Well, we have looked at the hour of death. But the rest of our life is just as revealing.

An American tourist, in France, went to the hotelkeeper to pay his bill. The French hotelkeeper said, "Don't you want a receipt? You could be charged twice." "Oh, no," replied the American, "if God wills I will be back in a week. You can give me a receipt then."

"If God wills," smiled the hotelkeeper, "do you still believe in God?" "Why, yes," said the American, "don't you?" "No," said the hotelkeeper, "we have given that up long ago."

"Oh," replied the American, "well, on second, thought, I believe I'll take the receipt after all!"

It was over a century ago, and a man and his nephew were traveling west through the Colorado mountains. But they had lost their way, and finally came upon a cabin among the trees. The country was still wild, and they were nervous when they knocked on the door. Could they sleep for the night? they inquired.

As they prepared for bed, they heard low mumbling words in the adjoining room where the family (a husband, wife, and grown son) were. Almost in terror by now, the two men feared for their lives. They were carrying considerable money. What should they do? They only had one revolver.

After a time, they heard the chairs move, a shuffling, and more low mumbling. This must be it! A plot was afoot to kill them. With beads of sweat on his cold brow and hands, the nephew crept softly to the door and peered through the keyhole.

Coming back to the bed, his entire demeanor was changed. "Everything is all right," he whispered, and explained what he saw. Immediately both fell soundly asleep and did not wake until morning.

Through the keyhole the young man had seen the family kneeling. They had read from the Bible, pushed back their chairs, and were praying.

The two men knew they had nothing to fear; they were in the home of genuine Christians.

"Have you studied Voltaire, Tom Paine, Robert Ingersoll, or any of those fellows?" asked a passenger as he stood by the captain at the wheel of a steamship.

"No," replied the captain.

"Well, you should. You can't fairly turn down their argument until you have thoroughly investigated for yourself," the passenger replied.

"I've been captain of this ship a long time," said the captain. "The charts that I work with tell me the location of the deep water, so I can safely guide the ship into port. When I first became a sea captain, I decided that I would not investigate the rocks. The experience I've known other chaps to have with the rocks has been sufficient warning for me.

"Over the years I've watched the lives of men who have read the Bible everyday and loved God. Those were the men who had solid families, stayed away from drink, and helped other people in the community.

"And I've also seen the others: the drunkards, drug addicts, criminals, and all the rest. Those are the ones who have nothing to do with God and the Bible, and who never attend church.

"No, I've made my decision; I stay away from the rocks. My mother taught me the Bible when I was little, and I worship and serve the God of heaven who made all things. I'm not a bit interested in anything that Ingersoll, Voltaire, and Paine have to offer."

The preacher was on the street corner telling the passing crowds about Jesus Christ. A crowd had gathered and was listening intently. Then a hoarse voice spoke up from the back.

"Preacher, you've got it all wrong. Atheism is the answer to humanity's problems. People get into trouble and go crazy when they hear about Christianity. Religion is bad for minds and ruins lives. Come on now,—prove to me that Christianity is real, and I'll be quiet."

Everyone was interested to see what would happen next.

The preacher held up his hand for quiet, and then said this:

"Never did I hear anyone state, 'I was undone and an outcast, but I read Thomas Paine's Age of Reason and now I have been saved from the power of sin.' Never did I hear of one who declared, 'I was in darkness and despair and knew not where to turn, until I read Ingersoll's Lectures, and then found peace of heart and solutions to my problems.'

"Never did I hear an atheist telling that his atheism had been the means by which he had been set free from the bondage of liquor. Never did I learn of anyone who conquered hard drugs by renouncing faith in God.

"But I have heard many testify that, when as hopeless and helpless sinners, they had turned in their great need to the Son of God and cast themselves upon Him for forgiveness and enabling power to overcome sin—they were given peace of heart and victory over enslaving sin!"

Then, turning to the atheist, he said:

"Who starts the orphanages, the city missions, and the work among the poor? It is the Christians. Who owns and operates the taverns, and manufactures the liquor sold in them? It is the atheists. Who risk their lives to help poor people in mission fields all over the world? It is the Christians. Who runs the abortion mills and the houses of prostitution? It is the atheists. Who are the most solid, kindly, industrious people in the nation? It is the Christians. Who operates the gambling halls and the crime syndicates? It is the atheists.

"Who are the swindlers, bank robbers, and embezzlers? It is the atheists. Who helps men put away their sins, live to bless others, and prepares men for death and eternity? It is the Christians.

"Yes, professed Christians sometimes do bad things. But it is infrequent enough to be newsworthy. If an atheist does a criminal act, it is to be expected. But, if a church leader does it,—it will make the headlines, because it is such a rare event.

"What leads men to throw away the bottle and stop beating their wives? It is Christianity, not atheism. What saves the wayward girls, the teenage boys, and the rest of us out of lives of sin? It is Christianity, not atheism.

"Christianity offers eternal happiness that begins now. Atheism can only offer doubt, skepticism, a miserable end, and eternal death."

Then the crowd turned to the atheist to give an answer, but he was gone. He had crept away without answering a word.

And then there is that businessman that wrote an article which appeared in the American Magazine. He was a manufacturer, not a scientist. He had never seen the inside of a scientific laboratory, and had never heard of probability analysis. But that is what he was talking about when he gave this simple, but devastating, rebuttal of evolution:

"I have been reading about the wonders of the orbiting moons, planets, and stars. I am astonished at the intricacies of the galaxies, with all their myriads of stars circling a common center.

"I am no scientist. But I have enough sense to know that evolution is foolishness. It takes a girl in our factory about two days to learn to put the seventeen parts of a meat chopper together. It may be that those millions of worlds, each with its separate orbit, and all balancing so wonderfully in space . . . it may be that they just happened. It may be that, by a billion years of tumbling about, they finally arranged themselves. But, frankly, the whole evolutionary idea really does not make sense.

"I am merely a plain manufacturer of cutlery. But this I do know, that you can shake the seventeen parts of a meat chopper around in a washtub for the next seventeen billion years and you'll never have a meat chopper."

Dear Friend, just now accept Jesus as your personal Saviour from sin. If you will cling to Him in the coming days, study His Inspired Word, and pray each day, He will give you, moment by moment as you trust in Him, enabling strength to resist temptation and to obey His Ten Commandment law (Exodus 20).