

THE INSTRUCTOR



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

Volume 12

FEBRUARY, 1975

Number 2

TRIUMPH IN CHRIST

It seems to me that there are too many Christians filled with a spirit of despondence, insecurity and fear instead of contentment, certainty and joy. Paul wrote, "Now thanks be unto God which always causes us to triumph in Christ." (2 Cor. 2:14). So, we learn that there is "TRIUMPH" in Christ. Triumph means, "a state of joy or exultation because of success." "Speaking sports-wise," I think we have all witnessed the joy, exultation and enthusiasm that results from a victorious football team. On the other hand we have observed the despairing and disinterested attitude that arises when the team loses game after game. Of course, the outcome of a football game amounts to very little, but our spiritual attitude is of supreme importance.

Could it be that our lack of "joy" is due to the fact that we are not living victoriously? We learn from Galatians 5:17, that there is war between the flesh and spirit. I suspect many of us are not fully enlisting the help of Christ and therefore are on the losing side. A friend of mine, who some months ago quit smoking, remarked that the greatest blessing that he had derived from quitting, aside from

a clean breath and better health, was the victorious feeling for having licked an enemy. Indeed, it makes us all feel good to win. With each rising of the sun we face obstacles, the greatest of which is "self". But what I do with "self" is not a question to be taken lightly. In 2 Corinthians 8:5, Paul said of the churches of Macedonia, "but first gave their own selves unto the Lord"

It seems very likely that the spirit of defeatism that shrouds so many of us in every phase of life, is pretty condemning evidence that we have not truly given ourselves to the Lord. We are too inclined to govern our affairs to the wisdom of this world which is sensual and devilish, instead of the wisdom which cometh from above. We Christians have obeyed the call to battle, but as we march forth to conflict with sin and error, we are prone to direct our own steps. We would do well to recall the words of Jeremiah, "O, Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. 10:23). So, let us remem-

(Continued on page 4)

THE INSTRUCTOR

Published monthly in the interest of truth and righteousness by the congregation of Christ, meeting on Highway 431 South, in Albertville, Alabama.

CARROL R. SUTTON
EDITOR

Send all questions, comments, and criticisms to the editor, Route 3, Highway 431 South, Albertville, Alabama 35950.

Second-class postage paid in
Albertville, Ala. 35950.

Editorial . . .

What Is Your Life? (No. 2)

In our study in the last issue of this paper, we dealt with the question raised by James when he said, "**For what is your life? . . .**" Our study dealt with the question: **What is your life with reference to its origin?** We suggested that the greatest scientists and philosophers have been and still are unable to truthfully answer this question. Their theories and opinions are inadequate for honest, truth searching people. It was emphasized that the only light we have into this question that has perplexed man for centuries is contained in God's Word. It is clearly shown in God's Word that man originated with God. There should be no doubt that **God is the creator of man! We are His offspring! He is the Father of spirits!** Now let us resume our study of the question as to what life is, but from another viewpoint.

WHAT IS YOUR LIFE WITH REFERENCE TO ITS PURPOSE?

You are here on earth. You have life. You came from God. It is in Him that you live, move, and have your being. **Why** are you here? What is your **purpose** in life? Man has grappled with this question for centuries and has come up with a multiplicity of answers. However,

no dependence can be placed in any of these answers because "**it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.**" (See Jer. 10:23). Man of his own wisdom does not and cannot know why he was placed on earth. Only God's Word can give the correct answer. We appeal to it.

WHAT IS YOUR LIFE WITH RESPECT TO ITS PURPOSE ON EARTH? Let us first consider this question from a negative standpoint.

1. The purpose of man on earth is not to obtain worldly wisdom. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Prov. 14:12). Thus man's wisdom may seem right but will result in man's destruction. Consider what Isaiah 55:8-9 says: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts!"

There are some people whose primary desire is to seek and obtain all the wisdom this world has to offer. To them, this seems to be their primary purpose in life. To them this is the way of life. However, in 1 Corinthians 1 the apostle Paul showed that God in His wisdom so designed things so that the world by its wisdom could not know God. **God said:** "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." God has made foolish the wisdom of this world and hath chosen foolish things of the world "to confound the wise." We learn from 1 Corinthians 2 that Paul's preaching "was not with enticing words of man's wisdom" because he did not want the faith of the Corinthians to "stand (be) in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Paul described some people in Romans 1:22 by saying: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." This is descriptive of many people today.

2. The purpose of man on earth is not to gain earthly wealth or to accumulate material riches. The desire to be rich materially seems to be the primary goal in this life of many people. Of course, all should work and provide for the essentials of life, but one's primary purpose in life should not be to become rich. (See Prov. 23:4). One should realize that

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?

Jesus said: "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: . . ." (John 6:27). Paul tells us that **"the love of money is the root of all evil . . ."** (See 1 Tim. 6:10). Solomon said: "He that trusteth in his riches shall fall; but the righteous shall flourish as a branch." (Prov. 11:28). He also said: "Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death." (Prov. 11:4).

Jesus assures the faithful of the essentials of life when they **"seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,"** (see Matthew 6:33), but he shows the futility of trusting in material possessions when he said: "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: **for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.**" (Luke 12:15). Remember it was Jesus who also said: **"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"** (Matthew 16:26).

No, God's primary purpose for man on earth is not to gain earthly possessions! One may be rich in this world's goods and be **"poor toward God."**

3. The purpose of life on earth is not to enjoy sinful worldly pleasures, power, fame or honour. A Christian can and should "love life and see good days." He can be genuinely happy. He can enjoy many pleasures. He may even receive power, fame and honour in some areas. However, we have not been placed on earth for the primary purpose of enjoying ourselves from a physical standpoint. Jesus said: "If any man will come after me, **let him deny himself,** and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23). The apostle Paul informs us that "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that **denying ungodliness and worldly lusts,** we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." (Titus 2:11-12). "The pleasures of sin" last only "for a season," but their wages, i.e., **spiritual death,** last forever and ever. (See Hebrews 11:24-26; Romans 6:23; Rev. 21:8). Therefore, we should **"ab-**

(Continued in right column)

"We Cannot But Speak"

When Peter and John had been cast into prison because their preaching of the resurrection disturbed the Sadducees who did not believe in it; they were threatened and then commanded to speak no more in the name of Jesus. "But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard." (Acts 4:19-20). As in many other passages the word "cannot" denotes not impossibility; but impracticability: they had been commissioned to speak and nothing but death would silence their tongues.

How compelling was the message these men proclaimed! God's Word should always be. Long ago a weary prophet said: "Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." (Jer. 20:9). He too, found it impracticable to stay his lips—he must speak! Isaiah was told: "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." (Isa. 58:1). When Paul wrote Timothy he gave the same message to him: "Preach the word. Be urgent in season, out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they

(Continued from left column)

WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?

stain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." (See 1 Pet. 2:11).

God forbids us to engage in sin because sin will bring unhappiness here and damnation hereafter. One whose purpose in this life is to enjoy worldly pleasures, power, fame or honor **will be a miserable failure!**

So from a negative standpoint, **the purpose of man on earth is not: (1) to obtain worldly wisdom, (2) to gain earthly wealth or to accumulate material riches, or (3) to enjoy sinful pleasures, power, fame or honour!**

(CRS)

(To be continued)

(Continued from page 3)

"WE CANNOT BUT SPEAK"

will not endure sound doctrine . . ." (2 Timothy 4:2-4).

There are many needed things by our society today. Some badly needed items are men who live with a sense of compulsion and urgency: the gospel must be preached and no time may be wasted in seeing that men hear it. When Paul wrote the Roman church he set forth his concern for the gospel by saying: "I am debtor;" "I am ready," "I am not ashamed." Paul was debtor to preach the good news to all; he was ready; and with as much strength as was contained within him. Paul was not ashamed of the gospel.

We have words that the world needs to have, will be lost in fact if it fails to hear. How can we be unconcerned about speaking the words of Christ? The gospel is for all. It reveals a righteousness of God for sinners. It points the way to justification. It is God's power to save. We will be held responsible for our failure to preach the gospel. Let it be said of us as Peter and John said of themselves: "We cannot but speak!"

—Jim McDonald

JESUS SAID: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
(Mark 16:16).

The Hill-Sutton Debate

I wonder if the elders of the West Hobbs St. Church in Athens believe that "Any program, regardless of how good we think it is, that is not authorized by the Lord must be abandoned." Do they? Albert Hill made the above statement. I agree with the statement. Although the West Hobbs St. elders agreed to publicly defend some of their practices which the Eastside Church in Athens believes to be unauthorized by the Lord, they have not set a date for the HILL-SUTTON DEBATE. It has now been ten months since they promised to re-schedule the debate that had originally been set for last May. The last word I received from Albert Hill was that he is willing when Hobbs St. is. We are still waiting for them to honor their agreement.

(CRS)

(Continued from page 1)

TRIUMPH IN CHRIST

ber, as we go forth to do battle with the trials of life, we can win one victory after another, IF Christ is truly our captain. There is "Triumph" in Christ and in "Triumph" there is "joy."

—W. R. Jones

Sentence Sermons

It's what we learn after we know it all that really counts.

He who stands high in his own estimation is still a long way from the top.

Some people would say more if they would talk less.

When it comes to giving, some people stop at nothing.

CHURCH OF CHRIST

Route 3, Highway 431 South
Alberville, AL 35950