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LIVING the Life

**AN OUTLINE ON
CHRISTIAN LIVING**

by

John 1915
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INTRODUCTION

In the Gospel of John, chapter 10 and verse 10, our Lord Jesus said, "The thief (Satan and any falsehood) cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

This wonderful statement includes a solemn warning and a precious promise. The warning is — do not let the thief take over your life! The devil never brings blessing into a life — only a curse! The Lord Jesus, on the other hand, brings nothing but blessing — the abundant life!

The Bible tells us that there are two spheres of human existence — the carnal (natural) and the spiritual (Romans 8:5-13). All men live by nature in the carnal sphere until they become the children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. By nature all men are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1), and are "by nature the children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3). It is for this reason that our Lord emphatically declared that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Jno. 3:3).

The Bible also teaches us that within each of these main spheres of human existence there are many variations. An unsaved man is not necessarily living a wicked, dissolute life. There are many unsaved people who live on just as high a plane morally and socially as Christians do. But the unsaved are "in the flesh," and as such "cannot please God" (Romans 8:8). This means that their entire lives are lived without vital and personal relationship to God and without reference to His will and His Word. That is, they are *spiritually dead!*

Within the Christian experience there are also variations. Some believers live on a low spiritual plane — these are called in Scripture "carnal" Christians (I Cor. 3:1-4). The carnal Christian is the believer who has not developed beyond the stage of babyhood in his spiritual life — he is immature, fickle, childish, selfish, peevish, and in other ways not of much use to himself or to the Church. On the other hand, there are truly spiritual believers — Christians who are completely surrendered to Christ, taught in the Word, obedient in life, mature in their attitudes and sense of values, and a credit to Christ and the Church. This is the kind of Christian the Lord Jesus had in mind when He said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

In this study we shall be thinking of the Christian life and how it can be made "abundant" — an enjoyable, useful, satisfying experience — the kind of life God intended for every person — the kind of life that is found only in the Lord Jesus Christ. We shall pursue several lines of thought: the *origin* of the Christian life; the *purpose* of the Christian life;

the *evidences* of the Christian life; the *guide* to the Christian life; the *development* of the Christian life; the *enemies* of the Christian life; and the *benefits* of the Christian life.

I.

THE ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Now, if the Christian life is *the* life God intended for every man, but if man is spiritually dead by nature, how does he make the transfer from one to the other? This is, without doubt, the most important question ever asked because on its proper answer hinges the difference between life and death, success and failure, Heaven and Hell!

Sometimes it is best to think through a subject negatively for the sake of emphasis. Let us consider how a person does not become a Christian! In the first place, a person does not become a Christian merely by turning over a new leaf. It is very possible for a man to reform his life morally without becoming a Christian.

A man does not become a Christian by simply desiring a different kind of life. No man ought to suppose himself a Christian just because he is fed-up with his present manner of life and would like something different.

Nor does the Christian life necessarily begin by making a public stand for Christ in a church or some religious gathering. This act is helpful and may indicate the beginning of a true Christian experience, but it does not prove that the person is a Christian.

Again, the Christian life does not begin by being baptized and joining the church. Every true Christian ought to obey the Word and be baptized, and he ought to be a member of some Bible-believing church, but merely going through these forms does not bring new life to the individual.

The Christian life is not indicated conclusively by a good opinion of Christ, the Bible, and the Church. A man might believe that Christ died for the sinner, that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, and that the Church is the most worthwhile institution in the world, and still be unsaved.

How then does the Christian life begin? The Bible gives the answer with crystal clarity. In the first place, *the Christian life begins with God*. It is very natural for a person to think of the Christian life in terms of his own experience — that day he came under conviction, or that day when Christ became real, or that day when he had "reached the end of his rope"

and turned to Christ. Actually, however, the believer's experience was planned in the heart and mind of God before the foundation of the world. God loved the believer personally from eternity and chose him and gave him to Christ long before the world was or ever angel's wing fanned the ether! Study John 6:37 and Eph. 1:4 in this connection.

The drama of salvation began in the mind and heart of God in eternity, but it is enacted on the stage of the world in the personal encounter of each of God's elect with the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, how does this encounter take place? The Bible gives the answer.

The Lord Jesus said that "except a man be born of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). He also went on to explain that this event is a mysterious activity of the Spirit of God (v. 8). The Holy Spirit hovers over the spiritual tomb of the man "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1), and lifts him out of his grave! Now, the soul is ready to do business with Christ! The soul is now sensitive to the leading and teaching of the Holy Spirit, he is aware of his sin and his need of the Saviour, he is given a spiritual appetite and a longing to get rid of his guilt and to be in fellowship with God.

Made sensitive to God the awakened sinner experiences a drawing to Christ (John 6:44); he discovers that the Bible, once a closed book to him, now begins to make sense (I Cor. 2:14); for the first time in his life the Gospel becomes personal and he feels, every time he hears it or reads it, as if God were speaking to him personally, and the "whosoever" of the message brings him great encouragement to trust the Saviour for himself (John 1:12). Then he believes — believes with his heart and not only with his head — and Christ becomes his Saviour and His Lord (Rom. 10:9-10). The moment he believes he is justified — his guilt is removed — and he stands in the sight of God as one clothed in the righteousness of God Himself (Rom. 5:1; II Cor. 5:21). From this point on the believer, now a child of God forever (John 10:28-29), is expected to develop from infancy to maturity (II Peter 3:18). Now that he has "life" he is to move on into the "abundant life," about which we speak in this series of studies.

II.

THE PURPOSE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

When God created man He did so in order that He might represent Himself in the world. Man was made in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26-27). But sin marred that image and gives to the world a

distorted and oftentimes grotesque impression of God. When a man becomes a Christian — when he is born again by the Holy Spirit — that image is restored and the true believer begins again to imitate God and to declare to the world what God is like (Eph. 4:17 - 5:20).

In the first place *the Christian life is designed to demonstrate the craftsmanship of God*. Paul tells us that the believer is God's "workmanship" (Eph. 2:10). When the Christian realizes this he should make it his ambition to develop in his Christian life and testimony to the place where God is proud of him. God should be able to say of every believer what he said of Job, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" (Job 1:8).

Again, *the Christian life is designed to bring praise to God* for His grace and goodness. The Apostle teaches that the purpose of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of each one of God's elect is "unto the praise of His glory" (Eph. 1:14). The Westminster Shorter Catechism asks the question, "What is the chief end of man?" and answers it rightly, "The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." The Holy Spirit gives birth to the Christian life in the believer in order that throughout eternity he may be an object lesson to the entire universe of the unmerited favor of God (Eph. 2:7-9).

Certainly *the Christian life is produced by God for the happiness and welfare of the individual*. As we have already noted, the Lord Jesus speaks of the "abundant life." This is the happy life. The Word of God makes it clear that God wants men to be happy. In the full Christian experience God has provided everything needed to this end.

One other thing: *the Christian life, the abundant life, is designed to bring blessing to the world*. Just as the world needed Christ when He came, and just as the Saviour made His entry into the world to minister to its needs, so the Christian is sent forth in the place of Christ to meet the world's needs and minister to the world in His Name (John 20:21).

III.

THE EVIDENCES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

We have already noted that there are variations within the Christian experience. Some believers are immature and undeveloped in their spiritual lives, and some of these remain that way throughout their lives! Other believers continue to "grow in the grace and in the knowledge of Christ"

(II Peter 3:18), and attain to full growth in Christ. But in *every* believer, whether mature or immature, there will be certain evidences, certain marks, that indicate without doubt the reality of his spiritual experience.

At least one book of the New Testament was written with this in view — the setting forth of the evidences of the genuine Christian experience. John writes, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may (continue to) believe on the name of the Son of God." (I John 5:13) Now, what are some of the evidences set forth by this inspired writer?

The true Christian will walk in *obedience to the Word of God* (I John 2:3). This does not mean that there will never be a time in the believers' life when he will disobey God. There will come times of coldness and times of rebellion and stubbornness into every believer's experience, just as these things come to all children in their relationship to their parents in the home. The tendency to sin is still strong even in the best of Christians (I John 1:8-10). But the born again believer will not live his entire life in direct opposition to the will and Word of God. If he is a Christian he will try to obey, He will want to obey, He will strive to obey, and he will be unhappy and miserable until he *does* obey!

Again, another evidence of the Christian experience is that of *Christ-likeness* (I John 2:6). God intends that there should be a family resemblance — that every Christian should remind Him of His Son, the Lord Jesus. Paul writes that "whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:29).

Love of the brethren is another mark of the genuine believer (I John 2:7-11). All Christians sense that they belong to a family larger than their own particular denomination, and that they have kinship with all believers everywhere. The mark of a carnal Christian is the inability or the refusal on his part to acknowledge the unity of believers and to work for the preservation of this oneness (I Cor. 3:1-4). The spiritual Christian jealously guards the "unity of the Spirit" and seeks to maintain "the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).

The genuine Christian has his *affections centered in the things of God* rather than the things of the world (I John 2:15-17). The child of God will try to use the things of the world in a way that will bring glory to God and blessings to others. The spiritual Christian will not permit anything or anyone to usurp the place of Christ in his heart and life. Love for Jesus will push out all illegitimate loves. This does not mean that the Christian may not fall into temptation and temporarily yield to it, but it

does mean that he cannot be fully identified with the world, the actions of the world, the loves of the world, and the people of the world.

Again, another mark of the genuine Christian is that of *continuance* (I John 2:19). The Christian life may have its ups and downs, but it will gravitate in one main direction — UP! A true Christian will not completely and continually forsake Christ for the world.

A true Christian is *taught by the Holy Spirit concerning the Lord Jesus Christ* (I John 2:20-28). No true believer needs to be taught by anyone regarding the Deity of Christ. He believes this doctrine and cannot be shaken in his faith because the Holy Spirit will never permit a believer to deny this central truth of the Christian faith (John 15:26-27; John 16:12-15). Jesus said that no believer will ever follow a "stranger" — a false teacher who discredits the eternal Sonship of Christ (John 10:3-5, 14).

The truly born-again believer *will not make it his habitual practice deliberately to sin against the Word of God* (I John 3:1-10). The Christian will sin, yes, but he cannot persist in his sin with any measure of contentment and inner peace. Eventually the sinning Christian will be brought to his knees in confession and repentance (Phil. 1:6).

IV.

THE GUIDE TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

The Word of God and the Word of God alone is the guide to the "abundant life." We need to emphasize this because many Christians are unhappy, defeated and frustrated trying to measure up to some man-made and arbitrary standard of conduct.

There is a strong tendency on the part of some believers to substitute another standard of Christian ethics for the New Testament. We must guard against this and seek to measure our Christian conduct with the Word of God only. Let us consider some false standards current among Christians or professing Christians today — standards that have confused and almost hopelessly divided the people of God.

One such standard is that legalism. There are those who insist on transplanting the New Testament believer back into the Old Testament. This action is based on a false interpretation of the Word of God. It is true that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Romans 15:4); but this does not mean that the standard of the Old Testament is also the standard of the New Testament. The Old

Testament is primarily designed for Israel; the New Testament is designed for the Christian. Whatsoever in the Old Testament is binding upon the New Testament believer is re-echoed in the New Testament; whatever the New Testament omits or adds to the believer's standard of life is to be omitted or added by the New Testament believer. How tragic that some churches and some teachers insist on their followers keeping the Sabbath day and insist on their followers paying their tithes! About these two things the New Testament says nothing, and because of this silence such regulations are not to be practiced by believers in this present dispensation. I will have something to say about Christian worship and Christian giving in another place; suffice it here to emphasize that Christians today can get into very serious difficulties if they make the Old Testament their standard of conduct when God intends that the New Testament and the New Testament alone shall be the guide of the believer's life!

Sometimes a believer gauges his life by someone else's experience or peculiar gifts. Many a Christian has been made miserable because he does not seem to have had the deep experience of conviction of sin had by some other Christian. He thinks that maybe he is not saved if he does not have a similar experience. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Every personality has his own experience. God does not pour every believer into the same mold. He is the God of infinite variety. Some people are by nature jovial and full of life and fun. Other people are more sober and subdued. Let us not think that every Christian personality will be identical if he is really saved! The Christian should be happy, yes! But there are degrees of happiness and there are a variety of ways in which happiness is outwardly expressed.

If every Christian will study his New Testament diligently, consistently, intelligently and obediently he will find himself living the kind of a life that pleases God and produces the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Let the believer once acquire the habit of living in his New Testament and he will be living the "abundant life"!

V.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Our Lord said that He came to give life and that He came to give it "more abundantly." We want to know how do we get into this kind of life. First of all, let us carefully note that the Christian life *is* a development, a progressive development. The Holy Spirit *never* brings a new born soul into the world *fully* grown! When a baby is born into the world it

is born a baby — an infant. It is not produced a fully grown man or woman. Neither is the Christian born into the world fully developed in his spiritual life. Spiritual growth is a process, sometimes slow and sometimes fast depending on the abilities and determination of the believer, and on his spiritual environment. The Apostle Peter urges the Christian to grow in the grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. (II Peter 3:18). Such a command would be superfluous if there were no room for spiritual development.

It seems to me that this doctrine of spiritual development needs to be emphasised in these days. Many Christians are led to believe that they should have no trouble with temptations and with sin, that if they were truly saved they would never sin again, and that they ought to expect sinless perfection and the complete eradication of sin in their lives. The common experience of every believer, however, gives the lie to this teaching. The new Christian is a baby and as such he needs to grow. A baby acts like a baby; an adolescent acts like an adolescent; an adult acts like an adult (at least he should!). The same is true in the Christian experience.

The Apostle Paul had been a believer for many years when he wrote his letter to the Philippians. In that letter he confessed that in his own life and experience he had not yet known perfection (Phil. 3:12-14). Surely, if there was room for development in Paul's life after he had been a Christian for 25 years, we ought not to feel too badly if we recognize in our own lives the need for growth!

The tragedy is that in some cases the believer stays a baby Christian and never seems to develop out of the infant stage. This was part of the trouble in the church in Corinth (I Cor. 3:1-4). Baby Christians are "cute" for a little while, but when they will not develop and take their place in the Christian community they become trouble-makers and hindrances and parasites.

Now, how does the believer grow into spiritual maturity? First of all, *there must be the desire to go on with the Lord*. The believer will not develop if he does not want to. If there is no desire to become an adult in Christ then there will be a failure to use the means of growth at his disposal. A healthy spiritual life will manifest itself in an intense desire to activity and expansion (Psalm 27:4; Phil. 3:10-14).

The believer develops his spiritual life by a *constant study and assimilation of the Word of God*. Jeremiah said, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jer. 15:16). David tells us that the healthy, happy believer is the

man who delights in the Word of God, and who makes the Word of God his daily mediation (Psalm 1:2-3).

The Christian develops his spiritual life *as he walks in the light of God's Word*. Such exercise develops his spiritual muscles and makes him strong in the Lord. Paul speaks of those who "*by reason of use* have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14). Inactivity in the physical realm leads to helplessness; the same is true in the spiritual. When God reveals His truth the Christian is expected to act on it. As he moves about in the will of God he becomes strong and healthy and able to serve the Lord effectively.

The Child of God develops as a Christian and moves into the area of "abundant living" *by right response to the Providence of God*. Every circumstance of life is planned or permitted by God for the benefit of the believer's spiritual life. This is the meaning of Paul's famous statement, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28). The inspired Apostle goes on to show that this purpose is the producing of Christ-like Christians — truly, *this is the abundant life!*" (v. 29). The same thought is expressed in Romans 5:3-5. In this section the Apostle shows that the right attitude toward the circumstances of life inevitably promote a stable steadfast Christian — another way of describing the abundant life! In Hebrews 12:5-11, the Apostle demonstrates that the chastening and disciplinary action of God is intended to bring forth "the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (v. 11). Here again, is the life abundant!

Another very important means of spiritual growth is that of *Christian fellowship*. The Lord Jesus instituted the Church in order that He might provide a warm spiritual atmosphere conducive to spiritual growth — an incubator for infant believers, and a home for all His followers. The Christian cannot get along without the Church. A genuine Christian would never *want* to get along without the Church unless he is backslidden and entertaining some sin in his life!

The Christian who is in a right relationship with God will feel about the fellowship of believers the way David did: "How amiable (pleasant) are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts. My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God" (Psalm 84:1-2).

The Apostle Paul taught the tremendous importance of the fellowship of the saints: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as we see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25). Christians need each other;

they always have; but in these last days just prior to the return of our Lord the fellowship of believers is all the more necessary to give mutual encouragement to remain true to Christ and steadfast in the Christian life.

Because the Church is so important every Christian ought to work at maintaining its harmony and its spirit of warm Christian love. This is the thought of Paul's words in Ephesians 4:1-3: "I therefore the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

The Christian grows through service. As a little child grows in a home the wise parent will encourage him to assume more and more responsibility in the home. He does this because responsibility causes the child to grow and mature, to feel that he really belongs, and that he fills an important place in the household. The same thing is true of the Christian. The wise leader will encourage new Christians to assume responsibilities as they are able, and as they enter into the life of the Church and make their contribution they are thereby developing their own spiritual lives.

Paul teaches that every believer has some gift, some contribution to make to the Church which is the body of Christ (Eph. 4:7; I Cor. 12:12-27). As this contribution is made the believer will find heart and life more and more interwoven with the people of God Himself. Throwing oneself without reserve into the work of Christ is a sure way of developing into a strong and useful Christian (Heb. 5:11-6:1).

Another helpful means to Christian growth is that of *giving*. A Christian is never more like Christ than when he is giving. The Lord Jesus said, "The Son of Man is come not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). When Paul urged believers to share generously in the work of Christ he used the Saviour Himself as the classic example of this very grace: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (II Cor. 8:9). No man can reap a bountiful spiritual harvest in his own soul without first having sown a bountiful supply of the seed of generosity (II Cor. 9:6).

Let me suggest one other way by which the Christian life may be developed, and that is *the wise reading of helpful literature*. In this television age more and more people use their eyes and fewer people their brains. There is no substitute for the constant reading of worthwhile Christian literature. An often-made emphasis of the Apostle Paul was on the renewing of the mind. By this he meant, of course, the feeding of the mind with the Word of God. But the reading of books and articles

about the Bible and themes related to the Christian life is also of great help in developing the mind to grasp the great truths of the Christian faith. Paul's admonition to Timothy is appropriate to every believer. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (II Tim. 2:15).

VI.

THE ENEMIES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

The Word of God makes it plain that the enemy of men's souls desperately attempts to keep every soul from Christ. He blinds men, deceives men, entices men — anything to keep them from the Saviour. Nor does he give up his diabolical pursuit once a man has become a Christian. This fact many new Christians overlook to their consternation, disappointment, disillusionment and defeat."

Paul tell us that the believer is not to be ignorant of Satan's devices, nor of any of the enemies of his spiritual progress (II Cor. 2:11). In this chapter I want to expose, if I can, the forces marshalled against the child of God, and indicate how the believer may gain the victory and maintain it.

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE WORLD

There are three powerful foes of the abundant life: the world, the flesh (self), and the devil. Let us examine each one in the light of God's Holy Word. First, the Christian must do battle with the world. Of paramount importance to the believer who would live the abundant life is his understanding of the Scripture teaching on the "world." About this subject the New Testament has much to say: it gives us the inspired definition of "worldliness"; it sets forth the principle of basic antagonism which exists between the world and the Christian, and indicates the sinfulness of fraternization with the world on the part of a child of God; and it depicts the method whereby the believer may gain the victory over the world. We shall examine each of these subjects.

Definition of "world." The Bible states that the Christian is not to love the world: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15). This is a solemn statement and it necessitates a full understanding of just what the "world" is — that "world" which the believer is forbidden to love. The very next verse gives us the answer: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride

of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." These three things then — 1) the lust of the flesh; 2) the lust of the eyes; 3) the pride of life, constitute the "world" which the Christian is not to love. This trinity of evil is a summary of every possible sin.

Now, someone instantly says, "From this category of prohibited things my conclusion is that God doesn't want His children to have any fun in life!" And it would seem at first glance that the list *is* rigidly restrictive. After all we *are* in the body, and we do have certain drives and physical desires which are a basic part of our nature.

Further study, however, calls to our attention that God is not prohibiting anything that is normal and natural to the nature He has given us. Nothing here is said of the *legitimate* use of these drives and appetites and powerful desires of the heart and mind. God knows all about us; He knows what we need and what we want, and He has made adequate provision for the full satisfaction of every requirement in the "abundant life." What then does John mean by "the lust of the flesh"? By this term he means the fulfillment of the desires of human nature *out of the will of God!*

What is "the lust of the eyes"? It would seem that this is the sin of covetousness. When a man wants that which his eyes behold even though it does not and cannot belong to him, then he is guilty of the "lust of the eyes." When he looks upon forbidden sights in order to add fuel to the flames of carnal desire, then he is guilty of "the lust of the eyes."

John speaks of "the pride of life." This term refers to the living of life just for life itself. It is the desire for personal aggrandizement, for prestige, for power. It is the love of the plaudits and praise of men, the constant building up of the ego, the demand for attention, the amassing of things for the mere joy of possession. It is a purely materialistic outlook on life.

Our discussion thus far does not in any way constitute a full and complete analysis of the entire meaning of the text, but it does show, I trust, the general meaning of the "world" and it does indicate the reason why the Christian cannot love the "world" and the Father at the same time.

It might be well for us to think of the meaning of the word "love" as used by John in I John 2:15-17. By love he means *surrender*, because love *is* surrender. Love is the giving of oneself. If a person loves the world he will surrender himself to the three things already discussed as constituting the "world." If he loves God he will surrender himself to God and to the will of God. John tells us that surrender to the "world" indicates a "worldly" man — a man who lives entirely in the sphere of the flesh (Romans 8:5-9), — the "natural man" of I Cor. 2:14. The love of God has no place in the mind and heart of this man. But the love

of God in the heart of the believer excludes the love of the world and enables him to keep resisting the powerful tug of the carnal nature.

The antagonism of the world. The Word of God not only defines the meaning of the term "world," as is done, for example by John in I John 2:15-17, but it also indicates that there exists in the world a spirit that is basically antagonistic to Christ and thus to His truth and His Church.

There is no clearer evidence of this antagonism than in the Cross. It would seem that when the Son of God came into human history via the Virgin's womb that the entire world would have received him with open arms and open hearts. But just as soon as Christ began to teach and preach He ran into opposition. The Lord Jesus made men uncomfortable in their sins. He exposed the sham of their religious hypocrisy. He cut directly across the lines of the philosophy of the world and at once became the most controversial figure in history.

Gradually resentment began to build against the Saviour until men could tolerate Him no longer. The world made its choice: "Crucify Him!" Crucify Him! We will take Barrabas, but crucify Jesus!" And men crucified Him only because He was the Truth, because He was pure and holy, because He exposed and resisted and condemned all unrighteousness. Under the Saviour's scathing denunciation and conscience of mankind was smitten and instead of repenting man retaliated — with a Cross!

Now, it is important for the Christian who would identify himself fully with the Lord Jesus Christ and who would aspire to the "abundant life" to know the consequences of his decision. Let the believer carefully think through all the demands of discipleship so that he knows what to expect and so that he will not be disillusioned and discouraged when he, too, finds himself on a Cross!

In the Gospel of John the Lord Jesus, in His farewell discussions with His disciples, clearly taught them the existing tension between the world and the truth; "I the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep your's also" (John 5:18-20).

Let the earnest Christian know assuredly that if the world had no room in its heart for the Son of God, it will have no room in its heart for those who follow Him. This does not mean that the Christian should have

a negative approach to life and to the world, nor does it mean that he should assume a belligerent attitude. It does mean that if he sincerely tries to do the will of God from his heart and if he lives an active and aggressive life for Christ he will come into instant and open conflict with the world.

The Apostle echoes the teaching of the Lord Jesus when he states: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with and infidel?" (II Cor. 6:14-15).

Protection in the world. It was in the upper room on the evening before the Crucifixion that our Lord had warned His disciples of the existence of the inevitable tension between Him and His teaching and the world and its philosophy, and the impossibility of peaceful coexistence (John 14-16). It was also during the same discourse that He uttered His famous "Lord's Prayer," His great High Priestly prayer. In this prayer, among other requests, the blessed Intercessor besought the Father for His keeping power over the lives of His disciples, protecting them from the enmity of the world incurred for His sake (John 17:14-19).

You will notice from a study of this passage that the occasion of the world's hatred is the possession by the Church of the Word of God (v. 14). The Bible is the inspired expose of the wicked heart of the world. The Bible is the believer's guide-book into the will of God, which, when he walks in its light brings him into conflict with the world. The Bible is the divine record of coming wrath and judgment on the whole corrupt world-system. These things the world does not like, and in suicidal rage denounces (Psalm 2).

The possession of and practice of the Word of God distinguishes the believer from the non-believer and becomes the separating barrier between the world and the spiritual life. It was this that identified the Lord Jesus who is Himself called the "Word" of God (John 1:1). It was His fidelity to the Word of God that brought Him into disrepute with the world (v. 14).

Even though He knew the difficult situation in which the disciples would find themselves through the possession of the Word of God, Christ prayed, nevertheless, not that God would remove His beloved ones from this world scene, but that He would keep them while they were in it (v. 15). Why does He thus pray? Because the world *needs* the believer. It was because the world needed Christ that He came, knowing full well that He was coming to the Cross! And just as God sent His Son into the world to bring the blessing of salvation, so Christ sends His disciples

into the world to do the same (v. 18). Christ waits, almost impatiently (v. 24) for the gathering of all the saints to the glory of Heaven. But He submits to the Father's will, which is the witness of the truth of the Gospel until He has gathered all the children in! Surely the Christian can serve, even though he suffer, as long as he knows that God is watching over him, is keeping him from the evil one, and is going eventually to take him Home!

Faithfulness in the world. James speaks a strong word to the followers of Christ: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is the enmity of God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

The Apostle is not speaking of adultery in the flesh; he is thinking of spiritual adultery, of unfaithfulness to Christ and disloyalty to His cause. The believer is married to Christ (Romans 7:1-6). The moment he confessed Christ as his Saviour and followed Him in baptism, that moment he permitted the Saviour to slip the wedding ring on his finger. The ring stands for fidelity. It is a constant reminder of another's possession. When the Christian flirts with the world, and fraternizes with the world, and establishes enduring friendship with the world, he becomes guilty of spiritual adultery and places himself along with the enemies of God! This is a solemn thing!

How important it is that the believer who would live the abundant life keep his heart warm toward Christ. Let him study the virtues and the beauties of the Saviour. Let him stay close to the side of Jesus. Let him say as David said, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple" (Psalm 27:4).

THE CHRISTIAN AND SELF

The Christian's greatest problem is himself. When he masters himself in the light of the Word of God he is well on his way in the abundant life. There are four main areas of the personal life which must be controlled if the believer is to enjoy spiritual victory — his *mind*, his *emotions*, his *will*, and his *body*.

The Christian's mind. Have you observed how often the Bible speaks of the mind? The Word of God is way ahead of the contemporary emphasis on this long-neglected topic. Twentieth-century ideologies are battling for control of the minds of men. The so-called "cold war" is an assault on the mind not on the invasion beaches. Communism's "D-Day" is the moment that devilish philosophy, beaten on the shore of man's mind

by the waves of apparent logic, establishes a beachhead, from which to launch an all-out offensive designed to capture his entire thinking. And it has succeeded to the point that perhaps one-half of the world's population is directly or indirectly under its control.

The mind is an intricate, delicate and impressionable part of man's constitution. When God made man in His image (Gen. 1:26-27) He endowed him with intellect because God is also Mind. God gave man a mind in order that he might comprehend the Almighty, that he might reason, that he might remember, and that he might plan, and that he might cooperate with God in the domination of the world.

As long as man's mind was filled with God and with the thought of God he maintained his place of dignity and fellowship with the Lord. But when man became the victim of Satan's rationalizations his mind was enslaved and filled with all manner of evil. Study Romans 1:28-32, for the inspired but not inspiring description of the content of the depraved, God-forsaken mind of the man who is at enmity with God.

Paul speaks of the blinded mind (I Cor. 2:14; II Cor. 4:3-4). The unsaved are as those over whose eyes a veil has been drawn making it impossible for them to see the truth of God. Intellectual blindness is one of the consequences of sin. Happy is the man who has had the Heavenly Optician perform successfully the delicate spiritual surgery which alone can give back sight to the eyes of the soul (Eph. 1:15-23). Only when this operation has been performed can the mind grasp the things of God; only then can he "see the Kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

Following regeneration and the opening of blinded eyes, the restoration of the intellect to its place of spiritual comprehension, the mind must be cared for, nurtured, fed, cultivated. This is the function of the Word of God. The Apostle Paul speaks of the "renewing of the mind" (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23). To renew is to revitalize, to energize, to quicken. Renewal is a process. It is dependent upon the entrance into the mind of the truth of God. This is the meaning of Paul's word in Phil. 4:8, ". . . whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue (worthwhileness), if there be any praise, *think on these things . . .*" The Psalmist teaches that the abundant life (Psalm 1:3) is dependent upon constant meditation on the Word of God (Psalm 1:2).

The Christian's emotions. The Bible also speaks much about the heart. By this term is usually meant the emotional construction of man, how he feels. It is tremendously important how a man *feels* about things. It is

vital to his spiritual well-being that he be emotionally stable and healthy. A man's feelings influence his thinking. Truth gets at a man's mind and his will through the gateway of his emotions. Let a man feel right toward God and the truth of God has a chance. Let a man's "heart" be right toward God and the rest of his life will be right. We dare not minimize the place of legitimate emotionalism in the experience of the Christian. True Christianity is the perfect balance of intellect and emotions.

The Lord Jesus tells us that the heart of man is like a treasure chest (Luke 6:45). It may be filled with evil things or it may be filled with good things. He said, "Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies . . ." (Matt. 15:18-19). It is very possible for a man to think right but talk and act wrong, and he will if his heart is not right. Paul said that, "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (Romans 10:10).

There is infinite wisdom, then, in the admonition of the writer of Proverbs when he states: "Keep thine heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23). When the believer neglects his heart he develops spiritual heart trouble. When his heart is sick his spiritual life is sick. If, like the Ephesian Christian, the believer is losing his first love (Rev. 2:4), he should pray with all earnestness that God will rekindle the dying embers and stir the sparks into a blazing love for Christ, for the Bible, for the place of prayer and fellowship, and for the souls of men.

The Christian's Will. The abundant life is not so much a matter of whether or not the believer *feels* like doing the will of God, despite the fact that the emotions do play an important role in the Christian life; it is, rather, the *will* to do the will of God.

The will has been called "the executive faculty of the soul." The truth of God comes to the heart of the believer and warms him toward God; the truth grips the mind of the believer and enlightens his intellect; the truth comes to the will of the believer and urges him to act on it. The choice is his and he may act or not act, he may obey or disobey, according to the disposition of his will.

We speak about a "strong-willed" person, or a "weak-willed" person, and in fact there are these two types. But God has made adequate provision for *every* believer, weak or strong, to live the abundant life! Every believer can be just as good a Christian as he *wants* to be, as he *wills* to be.

Now, the believer may say, "But I do not want to do the will of God in every respect. There are some things I must honestly say I want to

do which I know are not in the will of God. What do I do about this?" The answer is: do the right thing whether you want to or not. And pray that God will "work in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

Now, what are some of the influences that will encourage the believer to exercise his will in the will of God? Certainly, a careful study of the *Word* of God is essential. The Bible is the truth of God. Conviction of this fact comes from a careful study of the Book. Once let the believer come to the conclusion that the Bible is *God's Word*, that it does reveal God's will, then the Bible will have great influence on the believer's will toward making the right choices.

A careful consideration of the consequences of disobedience will have power in the believer rightly to exercise his will. He may become acquainted with God's "Truth or Consequences" by noting this principle as taught throughout the Bible (Gal. 6:7-9), by reviewing his own life and experience, and by observing the principle as it works itself out in the lives of others.

Keeping one's eye on the benefits of obedience is another way to put pressure on the will to choose wisely and rightly. This is the positive approach to the Christian life. There is much more to be gained by doing the will of God than there is in opposing it. We will deal with this subject in the next chapter. Suffice it here to state that "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2:17).

The Christian and his body. The body is the vehicle of personality. A man's actions in the body indicate the condition of the soul. If there is harmony in the soul there will be holiness in the life. If mind and heart and will are synchronized with the Word of God the body will function in the will of God. Man is not the victim of his glands, as the behaviouristic psychologist would have us believe: he is the slave of whatever master he obeys. The believer may put his body at the service of the Saviour, or he may use his body as his own servant to please himself (Rom. 6:14-23).

How should the Christian deal with his body? In the first place, *he should acknowledge God's ownership of his body.* The Bible declares that the believer does not own his body, but that his body belongs to God. Paul said, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:19-20). Refusal on the part of the Christian to let God govern his body is deliberate thievery.

The Christian is under moral obligation to offer up his body to God

for His use. This is the teaching of Rom. 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." How else can God get His work done on earth without the use of the believer's body? The same thought is presented in Rom. 6:13, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

The believer will find help in yielding his body to God *when he remembers the Judgment Seat of Christ!* The Bible states that, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10). The same doctrine is taught in I Cor. 3:11-15. Here the Apostle speaks of the believer receiving rewards for obedience to the will of God while in the body, of — "suffering loss"!

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE DEVIL

It is not my purpose in this study to deal with the origin of the devil, or to try to prove that he exists. Every Christian has done and is doing battle with him, and is quite convinced that he is not just shadow boxing! The devil is very real, very ruthless, very deceptive and cunning, and very powerful. Many a Christian is kept from the blessing of the abundant life because he is the unwitting victim of Satan.

The devil is not omnipresent, nor omniscient, nor omnipotent. He is a creature and as such is limited and finite. But he is one of the most intelligent and one of the most powerful of all created beings, and he was working with him in the very closest cooperation of evil an innumerable host of wicked demons who are determined by sabotage and disrupt the Kingdom of Christ by harassing the people of God! (Eph. 6:12).

Satan gives no odds, allows no handicap, and takes vicious advantage of every weakness manifest in the believer's life. With studied effort the devil patrols the world seeking whom he may knock out of the battle for truth (I Peter 5:8). He plans his strategy, taking into consideration all the information he has gained by means of his marvellous espionage system, and, one by one, he eliminates from the ranks of Christ's followers those who are of use to Him.

Now, how can the believer gain the upper-hand over Satan? Is it possible for the Christian, weak though he is in himself, to put to flight this powerful and invisible foe? The answer, praise God, is yes! First of all, the believer must know how to wield the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17). This is the only aggressive weapon given to the Christian because it is the only weapon he needs! When the

Lord Jesus did battle with the devil in the wilderness as recorded in Matt. 4:1-11, He put the adversary to flight with the Word of God. If the Christian will study the Word, learn how to handle the Word, lay up the Word in his heart and mind, and then *use* the Word against the devil, he will *always* win the battle!

For the believer's protection against the attacks of Satan, God has provided an adequate armour. This armour is described in Ephesians 6:11-18. The teaching of this passage is that the Christian who has donned the whole armour of God cannot fall! No matter how viciously and fearfully and cleverly the devil attacks the Christian he cannot knock him down when he is wearing the entire uniform of God! (v. 13).

We cannot give a full exposition of this passage here, but I do want to mention the various parts of the believer's spiritual equipment as they are listed. The first piece of armour is "truth" (v. 14). This means *sincerity*, honesty with God. The believer must mean business or he cannot hope to defeat Satan in his life!

The second piece of equipment is the "breastplate of righteousness" (v. 14). The breastplate covers the heart and we have already seen how important is the believer's heart condition. If the Christian is determined to do the right and to oppose the wrong, if he has deliberately and wholeheartedly accepted the New Testament standard of conduct, and firmly believes that this is the only way to live, then the devil will find it impossible to penetrate this believer's defenses.

The next item of armour mentioned by the Apostle is that of "the gospel of peace" (v. 15). These are the warrior's spiritual shoes. The soldier in Paul's day wore a military sandal which protected the soldier's feet, and made it possible for him to move surely and quickly. This is the meaning behind the word "preparation" or preparedness. The "gospel of peace" is the message of the Word of God — a message of peace — peace with God and the peace of God in the soul of the believer — a peace that gives courage to the heart and swift obedience to the spirit. The child of God should mount up with wings as eagles; should be able to run and not be weary; he should be able to walk — through the muck and mire of the world — without fainting. This he can do if he wears Gospel shoes!

Paul elevates, as the most important part of the equipment the "shield of faith" (v. 16). Faith, or unquestioning confidence in God and His Word, is the shield that wards off every burning dart hurled at the Christian by the enemy of his soul. No flame-tipped spear of discouragement, or doubt, or despondency can penetrate the protective covering provided by the shield of faith!

We have mentioned the "sword of the Spirit" which is the Word of God. This powerful weapon of God wielded by the Spirit of God is invincible. Note the description of the Lord Jesus in glory given in Rev. 1:16, ". . . and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword . . ." By His Word He conquers; and by His Word we too shall defeat our ancient foe.

The matter of prayer has also been discussed in another place in this booklet, but note how the Apostle leans heavily on this great protective wall surrounding the Christian (vs. 18-19). Paul counted on the prayers of the saints in his behalf. Spiritual battles, both our own and those of others, are won through earnest, persevering, believing prayer.

VII.

THE BENEFITS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

In our theme text, John 10:10, the Lord Jesus contrasts the life of the worldling with the life of the Christian. It not to be too difficult for a thinking person to decide which he wants! No one deliberately chooses to be robbed, murdered, and destroyed! And yet, wonder of wonders, the world is filled with people who *have* deliberately chosen to be under the domination of the enemy rather than the sweet will of God! The only answer, of course, is human depravity. The truth of the matter is as Paul states it in Eph. 2:1-3 — the man without Christ is walking "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience . . ." (v. 2).

But the Christian, even though he may not be completely sold out to the will of God, yet has a *measure* of concern regarding his life. He does not *want* to waste it; he does not *want* to come up to the end of his earthly pilgrimage with nothing of service for God to show. This very tension between his own will and the will of God tends to push him toward *some* progress in the spiritual life. And as long as the direction of his life is upward there is the possibility of his finally coming to the place of discipleship, of the abundant life.

One of the ways by which the believer may be quickened to cooperate fully with the will of God is to stress the benefits of such a life. Incentives to holiness are legitimate. The Lord Jesus spoke much of rewards and held out promises of future and eternal dividends with the view of encouraging service. Study carefully the following teachings of the Saviour

with regard to the dividends that accrue to the believer who lives the abundant life for Christ. (Matt. 6:19-21; Mark 10:28-30; Luke 12:31-34; Luke 19:15-19; Rev. 2-3). The Apostles also clearly delineated the benefits that come to the life lived for Jesus (I Cor. 15:58; Gal. 6:9; II Tim. 4:6-8, etc.).

Fellowship. The abundant life is the result of obedience to the Word of God and obedience brings fellowship. John has this in mind when he writes I John 1:3-6, 7, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. . . . If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

You will note that the fellowship of obedience includes both God the Father, Christ the Son, and all believers. What a blessed trinity of fellowship is this! God longs to have fellowship with His children. He has a Father's heart and cannot be satisfied without the very closest relationship with His loved ones. We have considered the great loss to the believer when he lives on a low spiritual plane — in the carnal sphere — in perpetual babyhood. But think of the loss to the Father and the Son! David said that "the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself" (Psalm 4:3). Paul states that the believer is the inheritance of God (Eph. 1:18). What a privilege God extends to man to walk in fellowship with Him! to live in harmony and sympathy and loving cooperation with the Father!

The second area of fellowship is that of agreement with the saints — ". . . we have fellowship one with another. . . ." (I John 1:7). The abundant life includes the surest fellowship this side of Heaven — the fellowship of the children of God. Christians who walk in disobedience to the Word of God rob themselves of this blessed fellowship. Sin not only separates from the Father and from the Son but also from the saints. Walking in the light — living the abundant life — brings to the obedient believer the rich experience of fellowship with God and with His people.

Peace with self. Not every believer is at peace with himself; but the believer who is living the abundant life is! Full surrender to the will of God in very detail of his life brings inevitable freedom from a troubling conscience! Any kind of war is bad, but civil war is the worst! Many a Christian is living in constant inner turmoil with the spirit warring against the flesh. Paul knew what this torment was like and in anguish he cried, "O wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me from the body of this

death?" (Romans 7:24). In this spiritual struggle Paul was going through he had his ups and downs. Sometimes he had the victory, but mostly he was defeated. When he gave way to the flesh his soul was troubled because his conscience, like the faithful sentinel it is, kept his waywardness ever before him. Not until he gave in and "let go and let God" did the Apostle discover the delightful comfort of an untroubled conscience. After this Paul made him ambition always to have a conscience "void of offense toward God and toward men" (Acts 24:16). Such a conscience is one of the rich dividends of the abundant life!

Peace with Providence. The Christian living the abundant life is at peace with the Providence of God. All the circumstances of his life contribute to his spiritual growth and enable him to develop into the likeness of Christ. Paul states that the trusting believer "glories in tribulations" because he knows that the trials of life promote steadfastness of character and living (Romans 5:3). The same thought is beautifully brought out in Romans 8:28-30.

Singleness of heart and purpose. A precious product of the abundant life is that of personal integration. Many personalities are shattered and disintegrating because there is no unifying purpose. The Lord Jesus had this in mind when he said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart, and with *all* thy soul, and with *all* thy mind, and with *all* thy strength" (Mark 12:30). Notice the emphasis on the word "all."

Also note the four areas — heart (emotions), mind (intellect), soul (spirit), and strength (active effort, or energy). These four constituent parts of human personality when unified and all concentrated in love to God develop a beautifully integrated person, a person who is in harmony with God and with himself and with his fellow man, a person who is in perfect synchronization with the will of God (Romans 12:1-2). Study Psalm 27:4; Matt. 6:19-24, 33; and Phil. 3:10-14 in this connection.

Sense of security. The student of human behaviour insists that much of the abnormal actions of men stem from a sense of insecurity, most likely developed through the experiences of childhood. Parents are without doubt much to blame for this condition. Now, God is the believer's Heavenly Father. God knows everything about each of His children. He knows exactly how to deal with every believer so as to develop his personality to the fullest extent, to the believer's happiness and to the glory of God. The birthright of the Christian is security of soul. God accomplishes this by making His child feel wanted and loved. The believer has but to look to Calvary to be convinced of this!

Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan!
Oh, the grace that bro't it down to man!
Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary!

And the Holy Spirit breathes the sense of the love of God into the believer's soul, ". . . the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5).

God gives His child the sense of security *by removing from his heart all fear*. Fear is a damning, disintegrating force in the soul. But the Christian can say with David, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1).

Again, God implants a feeling of security in the soul of the believer *by relieving him of all anxiety or needless worry*. Paul makes a great therapeutic statement in Phil. 4:6-7, "Be anxious (overly worried) for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

The sense of being needed. Perhaps nothing knifes through the soul of a person like the feeling of not being needed. Not to feel needed by anyone is cause for misery. But the Christian should never feel this way for God really needs him! God depends upon every believer to help Him get the Gospel out (Matt. 28:18-20), to serve Him as His ambassador in the world (II Cor. 5:20), and to make his own individual and peculiar contribution to the body of Christ (Romans 12:3-8; I Cor. 12:12-27; Ephesians 4:7-16). What joy is comparable to that of ministering to the needs of others? (Heb. 12:12).

The Fruit of the Spirit. The list of nine graces summarized in Galatians 5:22, forms a synonym of the abundant life. Let the believer meditate on each of these qualities and let him ask the Holy Spirit to produce them in his life. Add to this list the one given by the Saviour in Matt. 5:1-12. These things totaled add up to the happy life, the normal Christian life, the abundant life!

Anticipation of the Saviour's Commendation. This life is not all there is. Living for Christ on earth brings its own rich rewards, but God is not satisfied with this: He has planned a great graduation day for all His children — at the "Judgment Seat of Christ"!


Now, for some believers, those who have been content with merely existing as a Christian, but who have had no interest in the abundant life,

the Judgment Seat is not a pleasant prospect (I Cor. 3:5); but for the earnest believer who has labored in the interest of his own spiritual progress and in the interest of the spiritual welfare of others — for him, the Judgment Seat of Christ will be the most rewarding event of his entire experience (I Cor. 3:14; I Cor. 15:58; Gal. 6:9; Rev. 2-3). Note the promises to the "overcomer" given in the last mentioned passage, namely, Rev. 2-3.

CONCLUSION

Let us conclude with the Saviour's words given in the passage we have tried to develop as the theme of our studies on the abundant life: "The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Dear friend, it is my earnest prayer that the Spirit of God may have used this exposition to bring encouragement and blessing to your hearts and lives. If ever the Church needed men and women who are living "the abundant life" it is now, and I am convinced that very few unbelievers, humanly speaking, will ever become interested in the Christian life until they see more evidence of the power of Christ in the lives of those who are His followers. God bless you as you determine in your own heart not to be content with mediocrity in your own experience, but to press on in the abundant life "toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. 3:14).



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