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INTRODUCTION

This little publication consists of 2 articles by Clon C. Brown of High Point, North Carolina, both from issues of The Missionary Revivalist.

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1
WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?

From the September, 1967 Missionary Revivalist

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James 4:14: "What is your life?" -- The question is one of twenty-two questions we find in the book of James. It has been said that "selfishness is the greatest sin; the church is the greatest institution; the body is the greatest temple; love is the greatest thing; happiness is the greatest quest; and this question, "What is your life?" is the greatest question.

There are two sources of information to which we can go for an answer to this question; one is to the world and the other is to the Bible. If we were to go to the world we would get one of three answers, Things, Thrills or Thrones. A great segment of the world think that for them to live is "things." If they can have more houses and lands, stocks and bonds, gold and silver, they think they are really living. But what does the Bible say? "Life consisteth not in the abundance of things which (man) possesseth." So we will have to refuse the answer of the world. Another great segment of the world will tell you that for them to live is "thrills." This is the reason the world has gone almost wild after sports and all kinds of pleasure, until we hardly know we have a Sabbath day. But again, what does the Bible say about it? "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." So again we will have to pass up the world's answer to this part of the question. Then

another crowd, perhaps not so large, will say that for them to live is "thrones." That is what they want, and they are determined to rule over something. Jesus said in essence, "The Gentiles want lordship over you, but if you want to be great, become servant of all."

The Bible depicts our lives in four ways. First, our life is a Field. It is a two-fold kind of field; it is the field of the flesh or the field of the spirit. We are sowing in one or the other; we cannot sow in both at the same time. We will reap in kind what we sow and we will reap more than we sow. If we sow to the flesh it will be corruption, but if to the spirit it will be life everlasting. We shall reap more than we sow in either field. I am glad it is so in the spirit. We plant and water, but God gives the increase. Bishop Asbury stopped and talked with a Negro boy fishing by the side of a canal and got him converted. A few years later Mr. Asbury was called into this place to organize a church of three hundred members as a result of the ministry of this boy.

Again, our life is a Stewardship. We are the steward of our soul, mind and body. Everything we have is because of these three. If we have salvation it is because we have let God come in. Our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost and if it is used for other things we are unfaithful stewards. Most backsliding begins in the mind. If we are the right kind of stewards, we will keep our minds on the right things. We think about the things we see, and hear, and read. Here is where we have to pass up T. V. -- most of it is the wrong things to look at. Most of what is on the radio is just trash. Then the news stands are filled with filthy books. So we will have to turn to other places to find the right things to see and hear and read. The Bible should be first, and then good books and papers. David said, "Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee." Paul said, "If there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things . . . and the God of peace shall be with you." What kind of steward are you? Remember you are the steward of your soul, mind and body.

Third, your life is an influence. There is absolutely no escape. Every movement of our faces, every act of our bodies that is seen exerts an influence, which is either for good or bad. It is said that a man looked over a little village in England in search of some strong drink. He was heard to remark, "What is the matter with this town? I can't find anything to drink." An old man told him, "John Wesley preached here one hundred years ago." Oh, that we had a million Wesleys to turn loose in this land! Thank God for the influence of a holy man. The descendants of two men were traced for about 200 years. One was Jonathan Edwards. He had 1394 descendants; 13 were presidents, 64 professors, 60 doctors, 100 preachers, 75 army officers, 3 senators, 1 president of a ship building company, besides governors and mayors. Not one was ever sentenced for any misdemeanor. On the other side of the picture was a man by the name of Max Jukes. He was a lazy drunk who had 1,720 descendants. Three hundred died in hospitals, 300 died in infancy, 400 were afflicted with venereal disease, 400 became infirm, 50 were notoriously immoral, 7 were murderers, 61 averaged 12 years each in prison, 130 for some other offense, and they cost society \$1,200,000.⁰⁹ Oh, the power of influence! I want mine for good and for God.

In the fourth place, our life is an Uncertainty. It is like a vapor. It is like a tale that is told. It is like the grass of the field. If we are not saved there are two things that make our chances slim. One is the hardening effects of sin." Dr. Truitt put a test to 1200 professors. Only three were converted after 45, only seven after 35, only thirteen after 25 and the rest under 25. Nineteen out of twenty who get saved do so before they are twenty years old. It is the hardening effects of sin. The

second thing that makes our chances slim is the uncertainty of living. We know not what a day will bring forth. Today is the day of salvation. We will have to come to God's terms and God's time. His terms are repentance and His time is now.

*Pastor of High Point, N. C.,
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2

LIGHT AFFLICTIONS

2 Cor. 4:17

From the January, 1973 Missionary Revivalist

It might do us all good to check on Paul's "light afflictions" and see why he called them light.

Take a look at 2 Cor. 4:8th through the 12th verse: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you."

Take another look at 2 Cor. 6:4-10. "But in all approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right-hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report, as deceivers and yet true; as unknown and yet well known, as dying and behold we live; as chastened and not killed; as sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor yet making many rich; as having nothing and yet possessing all things."

If this is not enough listen to another report in 2 Cor. 11:23-30. "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in death oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides these things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities." Hear him testify again in 2 Cor. 12:10. "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities,

in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ sake, for when I am weak then am I strong."

Also in Rom. 5:3-5, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience: and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." You read about some of these experiences in Acts, ninth chapter, and the sixteenth and twenty-seventh verses. He sums up the entire thing in Rom. 8:35-39 when he asks, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

My, what a list! Who has ever suffered so much? How can he call them "light"? I see at least four reasons why he can thus speak.

First, "that the life of Jesus might be made manifest through his flesh or mortal body." What Christian is it who does not want Christ to be seen in their lives? Here is one way for it to be done.

Second, because of the blessing he realizes he can be to others who suffer the same things. "Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." 2 Cor. 1:3,4.

Third, they helped to keep him humble. 2 Cor. 1.2:7, "Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations." Pride certainly leads to a fall and it is only the humble that walk with God.

Fourth, they added to the glory of his eternal reward. 2 Cor. 4:17, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding eternal weight of Glory." There were two things that helped him to do all this. First, he considered them all fleeting, "But for a moment." Second, "He looked not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen." He succeeded in getting his eyes off everything visible, good or bad; he managed to get out in the river of the Spirit where he could not see the shore, where he could not pass over, where all he could see was God. Traffic is not too heavy up this road but the reward is great.

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THE END

