

# 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*

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## WHO IS A CHRISTIAN?

The greatest compliment which can be paid to any man is to state, in truth, that he is a Christian (a follower of Christ). There is no strength in life or hope in death which can be compared to the strength and hope which flow from this name. But who is a Christian? How can we identify a Christian, or be sure that we are Christians?

### THE NEGATIVE SIDE

(1) One cannot identify a Christian as simply being a morally good person. Goodness and morality are characteristics of every Christian, but they do not make one a Christian. Nicodemus was an upright man, a teacher of Israel, but he could not enter the Kingdom without the new birth of water and of the Spirit. (John 3:5). Cornelius was a devout Gentile, a God-fearing man, but he was not a Christian until he heard and obeyed the Gospel. (Acts 11:14; 10:48). There are many men like these today, whose lives have been influenced by the moral teachings of Jesus Christ, but who are not Christians because they have never taken up the cross of obedient discipleship. (Matt. 16:24).

(2) Being religious does not make a Christian! The idolaters of Athens were very religious but they were not Christians. (Acts 17:22). Those who followed the "Jews' religion" were not Christians. (Gal. 1:13). Nearly all of the conversions recorded in the Acts of the Apostles are

conversions of people who were already religious, but whose religion was not acceptable to God: the Jews on Pentecost, the Bible-reading Ethiopian of Acts 8, the young Jewish leader, Saul, the devout Gentile of Acts 10, the prayerful Lydia — all of these were religious BEFORE they became Christians.

(3) The Old Testament saints were not Christians. The great patriarchs through whom God begat the nation of Israel, and the prophets of Israel, were men of God. Their lives were filled with faith, obedience, and many other exemplary characteristics, but they lived before Christ came, before the church began, and before the name "Christian" was given. The thief on the cross was not a Christian: the Lord's words were spoken to him during the dying hours of the Law of Moses. The great commission of Christ, which makes Christians, had not yet been given. (Mk. 16:15-16).

(4) Not all believers are Christians! Modern Protestant doctrine, reacting to the human system of works taught by Roman Catholicism, has declared that salvation is by faith only. We cannot believe that the Jews who believed in Christ, but would not confess Him due to their fear and love of praise of the Pharisees, were saved by belief alone. (John 12:42-43). James wrote, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." (James 2:24). No man is a Christian until he is

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Send all questions, comments, and criticisms to the editor at 1003 Baltimore Ave., Albertville, Ala.

## Editorial . . .

### "REJOICE IN THE LORD"

Trials and tribulations constantly face God's children on earth. Some do not profit from such as they should because of an improper attitude toward them. We should rejoice in such! In Psalms 68:3 the Psalmist said: "But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice." He further said: "I rejoice at thy word." (Psalms 119:162). We learn from Psalms 126:5 that "they that sow in tears shall reap in joy." In Prov. 15:13 Solomon said, "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance . . ." Further we learn in Prov. 17:22 that "a merry heart doth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones." "The righteous doth rejoice and sing." We are told in Eccl. 2:26 that "God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy . . ."

### CONSIDER WHAT JESUS SAID

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for so great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." (Matt. 5:10-12). The seventy whom Christ sent out to preach and perform miracles during his personal ministry were told to "rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:20).

Joy is a fruit of the Spirit. If we are led by the Spirit of God, we will rejoice even in sufferings and afflictions. Paul rejoiced in his suffering for others. Although there were many things that caused Paul to sorrow, yet he always rejoiced in the Lord. (2 Cor. 6:10). He said: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." (2 Cor. 12:10).

### WE ARE COMMANDED TO REJOICE!

"Rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep." (Rom. 12:15). "Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say, Rejoice." (Phil. 4:4). Paul further said, "Rejoice evermore" in 1 Thess. 5:16. The apostle Peter said: "Be loved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on his behalf." (1 Pet. 4:12-16). We should rejoice whether in prosperity or adversity. (Heb. 3:17-18). We should rejoice whether among friends or behind prison walls. (Phil. 1:18). We should rejoice whether in sickness or health. We should rejoice whether favored by men or persecuted by them. (Acts 5:41). We should rejoice whether in life or in death!

### WE SHOULD NOT PITY SELF

In recent years, many of us have gone through and, in some cases, are going through periods of church trouble. It is a very trying period indeed. Some have developed a martyr's complex. Instead of rejoicing in trials and persecutions,

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# OUR KING IS COMING

While our Lord was yet among men, He promised, "I will come again." Though many centuries have passed, this promise still echoes through the ages bringing comfort to the suffering saint, strengthening the faith of the wavering and anchoring the soul to a sure hope. Yes, **OUR KING IS COMING** — not to be crowned and begin His reign, for that was done more than nineteen centuries ago. Rather, He is coming to end His reign and claim His own!

**THE PROMISE.** Even before the first century ended there were scoffers who asked, "Where is the promise of His coming?" Peter replied to this mockery by reminding that they were ignoring the world's destruction in the flood, and that the same Word of God has promised a second destruction, this time by fire. (2 Peter 3:7). Thus, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief." (V. 10). The Lord is not slack concerning His promise. What the Lord has promised, He will do!

**THE TIME** of the Lord's second coming is not for man to know. We know that He will come, but we do not know when this climactic event will occur. "Of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the SON, but the Father only." (Matt. 24:36). The parable of the ten virgins was designed to encourage vigilant living, that we must "watch therefore, for we know not the day nor the hour."

**THE PURPOSE** of our Lord's coming is to end His reign. The dead will be raised at His coming. "Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death." (1 Cor. 15:24-26). The contrast between the doctrines of men and the teaching of God is clearly drawn. While men teach that the coming of Christ will mark the beginning of His reign, the Bible says the **END**.

**THE MEANING** of Christ's coming to the faithful is vigilant living. Since the Lord will return, and as we do not know when, we must live as if we expected

that coming as **ANY MOMENT**. After stating that when He comes, the world and its works will be burned up, Peter admonished, "Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God." (2 Pet. 3:11-12). Holy living, godliness, faithfulness to the church! This is what the second coming of Christ must mean to the Christian!

Christian, if you knew that Jesus would come this very day, would you be terrified or joyous? happy or fearful? Your answer is the key to your character!

—Bill J. Humble in "Pause—Ponder—Profit".

## Schedule of Services

### LORD'S DAY:

BIBLE STUDY ..... 10:00 AM  
WORSHIP ..... 11:00 A.M.  
WORSHIP ..... 6:00 P.M.

### WEDNESDAY:

BIBLE STUDY ..... 7:00 PM

### RADIO PROGRAM:

Monday thru Friday at 11:15 AM  
over WBSA, 1300 on the Dial.

We urge you to listen to the program and attend all the services! It will do you good!

## "If There Be Righteousness . . ."

If there be righteousness in the heart,  
there will be beauty in the character.

If there be beauty in the character,  
there will be harmony in the home.

If there be harmony in the home,  
there will be order in the nation.

If there be order in the nation,  
there will be peace in the world.

—Selected from "The Christian Visitor"

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### WHO IS A CHRISTIAN?

justified, and no man is justified by faith alone; hence, no man is a Christian by faith alone!

(5) Not all church members are Christians. A majority of those who are church members today are members of churches whose names and practices are not taught in the Bible. They are part of denominationalism which is contrary to the letter and the spirit of the New Testament with its commands for unity. Every man-made church will be rooted up, our Saviour taught (Matt. 15: 9-13).

### THE POSITIVE SIDE

The New Testament description of a Christian can be summed up briefly. He is a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17), having been born anew of water and the Spirit. (John 3:5). He is dead to the world, having been crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20), and baptized into His death. (Rom. 6:3-4). He is alive to God since he was "raised with Christ" (Col. 2:12), and has put on the "new man." (Col. 3:9-10). Through faith and obedience he has become a citizen of the Kingdom (Col. 1:13), a member of Christ's body. (1 Cor. 12:20). The Christian abides in Christ," "walks by faith," "increases in the knowledge of God," is "ready unto every good work," endeavors to "walk worthy of the Lord unto

all pleasing," and bears the "fruit of the Spirit" in his life.

A Christian is one who has put off the old man and put on the new man through faith in the Lord, repentance of sin, and baptism into Christ. ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN? — Harold Hazelip in "The Religious Reminder".

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### "REJOICE IN THE LORD

there is self-pity and murmuring. There is a spirit of malice and bitterness in some. ALL SUCH IS SIN!

In our zeal to contend for the faith, let us examine ourselves, lest we be lost because of our attitude toward self and others — especially evildoers. We should not "fret" because of evildoers. (See Psa. 37:1).

We should rejoice and be exceedingly thankful to God for so many wonderful blessings and privileges we have as Christians. We should rejoice in hope of eternal life. "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord!"

## A PUBLIC DISCUSSION PLANNED

Carrol R. Sutton and Royce E. Odom are to discuss the "Godhead Question" and the "Baptismal Formula" in Greenville, Miss., May 25-28, 1965.

## Sentence Sermons

It is better to be nobly remembered than nobly born.

Quiet people aren't the only ones who don't say much.

Don't brag about your ignorance. It costs more in the long run than education.

A righteous man prefers what is right to what is "expedient."

Life is a measure to be filled — not a cup to be drained.

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