

The Christian.

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VOL. VI.

We begin with this issue the sixth volume of THE CHRISTIAN. When it was started five years ago there were some things to discourage and not a few to inspire hope, and it was decided to try it for a year. The encouragement was such that another year was begun and then another, and so it continued and grew from year to year. We think from what we gather that if the minds of the readers and the patrons of the paper were taken at the close of the past year they would be as follows: A large majority would say "Let the paper grow and prosper." A few would say "We are not particularly anxious about it whether it lives or dies." A still smaller number would say "Stop it! Let it die." So with the voice of its patrons we conclude to continue it.

But we have far stronger reasons to continue THE CHRISTIAN than even the encouraging voice of its friends. We are persuaded that it is the will of Him whose we are and whom we wish to serve, that it should live and have an influence on the side of truth and righteousness.

This may be the place to examine afresh our motives in this work. Is it for payment in money we work? Certainly not! Do we expect to gain the applause of the world by it? By no means! The cause THE CHRISTIAN pleads is not now—never has been—popular. Will it lessen our toil or anxieties? (which sometimes appear all that we can bear). Nay, verily, but will largely increase them. Why then work on and for THE CHRISTIAN? "Our rejoicing is this the testimony of our conscience," that we do it to glorify God and to benefit our fellow men. We want to show the lost that Jesus came to seek and to save them—and has in the plainest and most positive manner declared how He will save them. THE CHRISTIAN aims always to impress these things upon the unsaved and to urge them to believe the very words of Jesus, and obey what He has commanded and be saved. It urges the saved to obey all things which Jesus commanded His apostles to teach the disciples, and to exhibit in life, temper and actions, the fruits of the Spirit of God. It aims to make the study of the scripture both profitable and delightful. Nearly every editorial is a careful examination of Bible subjects, so that the reader may arise from its perusal with additional light and a love of the truth.

If asked, Are you not as liable as others to have wrong views of scriptural subjects? we answer, We certainly are! Not only so, we regard as our best friends those who will give us more light, or will, in a Christian spirit, show us and our readers the points in which we may be wrong, or even the points in which we differ. Our desire is that both writers and readers should "prove all things and hold fast that which is good."

We are receiving encouraging letters from many quarters which, of course, we are not in the habit of publishing. Many speak in favor of the spirit and general make-up of THE CHRISTIAN. A senior editor of one of our papers has recently written: "I receive your paper and read its editorials with much profit."

Will our brethren continue their kind efforts to contribute to the pages of THE CHRISTIAN and to increase its circulation? We do not say that every subscriber can get a new one, but we do say that many subscribers can, and not a few get more than one. Will you assist? Without efforts it will die. Our circulation should be largely increased. It can be. It would improve the paper as well as reach and profit others. Who will be the first to send in one or more new subscribers?

EDITORIAL.

THE INTERCESSION OF JESUS.

And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. John xvii. 19.

From the work of Jesus on earth we can learn of His reign in heaven. What He began here He finishes there. When "He took upon Him the form of a servant," all else was laid aside and His entire energies were devoted to that service. He pleased not Himself—did nothing for Himself. He did all to honor His Father and to save and happy his brother-man. When He prays for the sanctification of His apostles, it is on the plea that he had for their sakes, and to gain that end sanctified Himself.

We will here consider Jesus' anxiety for the apostles' sanctification, and first of all inquire into His meaning of the word. Many use it as synonymous with *purification*. But this cannot be its meaning here. Jesus never purified Himself, for He was always as pure as the throne of God. But He sanctified Himself. He was once in the form of God... but took upon Him the form of a servant. In doing this He set Himself apart for a certain work. His father also set Him apart or sanctified and sent Him into the world (John x. 36). Sanctification means a *consecration* or *setting apart* for a divine purpose or work, a devotion to the service of God. Jesus prays His Father to keep the apostles from the evil that is in the world. He also prays Him to sanctify or *consecrate* them through the truth for their important work. He who has the greatest sanctification is not the man who talks most about himself not sinning in word, thought or deed, but the man who holds fast the truth and according to his ability does most to make the truth known to his fellow men. The apostles never claimed to be sinless, but they were earnestly devoted to the work of making others acquainted with the truth as it is in Jesus. And we may here see reasons for the intense anxiety of Jesus that they should be sanctified through the truth. His death was the only sacrifice for sin, and they were the only men to make this known. As the Father had sent Him into the world to die for sinners, so He sends them into the world to tell them of His death for their sins. Just as He was God's ambassador, the apostles were His ambassadors. They were the stewards of God's secrets. Without them the world would not know these secrets (I. Cor. iv. 1). In this way they were workers together with God (II. Cor. vi. 1). One of them says: "Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel"; Again, "If we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel... let him be accursed."—(Gal. i. 9) It is eternal life to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He had sent, and these were the men to make God and Jesus known. They had this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power might be of God and not of them.—(II. Cor. iv. 7). When we consider the exceeding and eternal value of the treasure, and the weakness of the vessels, we may see the great anxiety of Jesus that His Father should sanctify them through the truth.

But besides the natural weakness of the men in trust, they were to be left in a world wholly opposed to their work, a world that could combine intrigue with power to defeat it. When they would not be intimidated by frowns and persecutions to give up the gospel of Christ, smiles and promises might induce them to add something to it or take something from it. No doubt they would be sorely pressed from this quarter. The Jews would allow Paul to preach the cross if he would only add to it circumcision. It might be urged as a small matter to him, but one which would at the same time end his persecutions and turn thousands of Jewish enemies into admiring followers. Yes, indeed, and that he might by this expedient reach

them with the dying love of Jesus when he could in no other way. Jesus foreaw all these temptations in the pathway of His apostles, and He prayed that they might be so filled with the spirit of truth as to resist all, and faithfully make it known to others. How reasonable was Jesus' anxiety, how grand His plea—Father, sanctify them through the truth, that they may accomplish their part in the work to which I have entirely devoted myself.

We may learn from Jesus' intercession on earth how He intercedes in heaven. Devoting Himself entirely to honor God and to save man, He is the only mediator between God and man. Isaiah, in enumerating His wonderful works, declares that "He made intercession for the transgressors," and we can read how He did it. In His third annual visit to Jerusalem (Luke xiii) He speaks the parable of the barren fig tree, showing that God, after seeking fruit of the Jews for three years, and finding none, commands them to be cut down as the barren tree. But Jesus pleads for further time: Spare them this year also, till they see all that can be done. If my life and miracles, and tears, will not move them, let them witness my death. Let them see me scourged and wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Let them witness how freely I die for their sins, and how earnestly I pray on the cross that they may be forgiven. Let them hear the apostles with miraculous power proclaiming my resurrection, and offering my murderers a free and full pardon, and if they will then repent and yield the fruit of righteousness well, all the bitter past will be forgiven, all heaven will rejoice over them. But if they will not after that yield fruit, I will plead no more, cut them down. God heard the intercession of His Son, spared the Jews, and freely pardoned those who believed on Jesus through the apostles' word; but those who rejected the apostles' word He cut down. Even so it is now.

Now He intercedes for the apostles and all who believe on Him through their word He shows in this prayer. They place their case into His hands and He makes intercession for them according to the will of God, and His intercession prevails. The apostles were sanctified through the truth. They proved faithful to their trust, and have gone to receive their crown. We have the history of one as a sample of all. When Paul was ready to be offered, and the quivering curtain which hung between the seen and the unseen was about to drop, we hear his shout of triumph: "I have finished my course—I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH." He handed down to us what he also received from the Lord Jesus, unmingled with Jewish traditions or heathen philosophy. All who believe on Jesus through the apostles' word, and are earnestly praying the Father to sanctify them through the truth, and are striving to be like Jesus, are assured by His prayer of a union with Christ, a union in action, in prayer, and in truth, a union with Him and the Father soon to be consummated in eternal glory.

He suffered death for their transgression,
And has pledge and pattern given
Of His prevailing intercession,
Once on earth and now in heaven.

INFANT MARRIAGES.—An important event has recently occurred in India, and one that will have a most favorable bearing upon the social condition of the people of that vast empire. The Princes of Rajpootana have voluntarily abolished throughout their dominions the custom of infant marriages. This custom is one of the saddest and most productive of misery of any prevailing in India, and the present regulation is that in the future no girl shall be married under the age of fourteen, and no boy under the age of eighteen, unless, prior to the adoption of this law, a contract of marriage has been entered into.