

The Christian Life.

TO THE OLD.

BY ANSON DU BOIS, D. D.

"And even to old age I am He, and even to hoar hairs I will carry you."—Isa. 46: 4.

How gently fall the shades of evening,
The sun in silence drops from sight;
The air astir with softly breathing,
Half unperceived the failing light.

So come the hours of age and weakness,
The failure of our mortal strength,
And trusting for our needs in meekness,
Partly at first, and all at length.

Then though the eye grow dark and darker,
The very darkness brings the star,
Life's day brings triumph e'en in dying,
The morn eternal gleams afar.

Then bear with age in love and waiting,
If God span out your years so long;
Yet trustful, cheerful, hearty greeting,
Await that heaven of love and song.

NON-COMMITTAL CHRISTIANS.

BY THE REV. JAMES M'LEOD, D. D.

There are those to whom this title is applicable. They are not to be envied, neither should they be imitated, but nevertheless they occupy an interesting position.

Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, were, for a time, this class. They were present at the trial of Jesus, for they were members of the Sanhedrim. They heard the shout of the mob: "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" They knew that Jesus was falsely accused, yet they refused to defend Him. They had not the courage of their convictions. They were disciples of Jesus, "but secretly for fear of the Jews." They were not manly enough to speak out and show their colors. If in the supreme crisis of their Master's life they were Christians, they were also, at that supreme moment, non-committal Christians. They suppressed their honest convictions. They refused to confess Christ before men, and rather than avow themselves publicly as His disciples, they scarcely uttered a feeble protest against the crucifixion of their Saviour.

Nicodemus did, on one occasion, venture to say to the Council: "Doth our ears judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" But he quickly subsided when his fellow judges twitted him with the question: "Art thou also of Galilee?" As for Joseph, although he was noted for piety, and justice, and wealth, yet he was faint-hearted and afraid to express himself in opposition to public opinion. He was a Christian, but he was afraid to say so, and, for the time being, unlike Nicodemus, and along with Nicodemus, decided that he would be a non-committal Christian.

In respect of their hesitancy, and timidity, and lack of moral courage, Joseph and Nicodemus have had many imitators. With our knowledge of the Bible and of human history, it may be confidently affirmed that there is a church outside the churches. It is neither unscriptural nor unreasonable to hope that this outside church embraces a great multitude of our fellow immortals. There are friends of Christ in Christendom and outside of Christendom, who, for one reason or another,

have refused to confess Him, and who are content to remain non-committal. They shrink, with something like horror, from the thought of denying Christ, and yet they are not courageous enough to confess Him. They realize that they are sinners, and they know that Jesus is the only Saviour of sinners, and yet they are non-committal. Their attitude towards Christ and His Church is interesting. It would not be true to say that, with their present feelings, they are the stuff of which martyrs are made; but let us hope that, like Joseph and Nicodemus, they will some day very soon come out into the open, and prove themselves to be Christ's loving and loyal disciples.

The conduct of Joseph and Nicodemus is quite remarkable. If, at the trial of Jesus, they were fearful and timid and non-committal, we know that a few hours afterwards, they were ready to suffer martyrdom for His sake. It is both surprising and suggestive, that when our Lord's most intimate friends forsook Him, these two, who had hitherto been but secret disciples, came forth publicly and clung to Christ, and cared most tenderly for His dead body. Joseph "went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus." Nicodemus brought a hundred pounds weight of spices with which to prepare Christ's body for burial; and now openly acknowledging Him as their Saviour, they "took the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices," and gave unto it decent burial. We hear no more of them, but we may well believe that they were heartily ashamed of their former lack of moral courage when they refused to confess Christ, and that they regretted their unmanliness as long as they lived.

An apology might be made for them, just as an apology might be made for converts from Mahomedanism in these days. "All that a man hath will he give for his life," and there are places in this world today where an open confession of Christ would mean death to the confessor. The fear of man has been, to many, a snare; and because of this fear, some Christians are content to remain secret disciples of Christ, and they try to justify themselves in being non-committal. It is a snare of the devil and multitudes have been caught in it.

The inducements to confess Christ are stronger now than ever before. There is no danger at least in enlightened Christendom, of anybody losing place, or power, or property, or life, because of his public avowal of faith in Christ. We are glad that Joseph and Nicodemus did at last publicly avow the faith which they had secretly held. But how much more manly and courageous it would have been if they had done it when they were seated among Christ's judges. We wish they had confessed Christ sooner, but "better late than never."

What multitudes lack is enough of moral courage and decision of character to impel them to be true to their convictions. A moral coward is not to be envied. Any man who regards himself as a sinner, and who believes Jesus Christ to be the only Saviour of sinners, is a moral coward if he refuses to confess Christ as his Saviour. Such persons would do well to ponder the words of our Lord who says: "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in Heaven. But who-

soever shall deny Me before men (that is refuse to confess Me) him will I also deny before My Father which is in Heaven." There is not much comfort in these words for non-committal Christians.

THOUGHTS FROM THE FISHERMAN.

BY L. M. ZIMMERMAN, D. D.

The fisherman by no means has an easy time of it, but is persevering in the storm and in rough waters. Nor does he keep close by the shore, but rather out into the deep.

Like the fisherman, many in the Church of God today might be far more successful and richer in their experiences did they get rid of their timidity, and at the same time do less complaining.

Instead of hugging the shore all the while, lingering close by their childhood experiences, they would have far sweeter experiences did they launch out into the deep, into the wider experiences of God's privileges and graces. From the silent prayer, the secret following of Christ, the embarrassed worker should launch out with more manly courage, not being afraid to pray in public, not timid before the unsaved, not afraid to speak for the Master when duty calls, not complaining because some days are stormy, not fretful because perseverance is required in gaining the victory.

Let such get away from their early timid life, get away from their former reserved manner in church work, and let them launch out into the deeper channels of church consecration, and instead of complaining that there is nothing to do, that they have not been able to accomplish anything for God and self, they will soon discover that the gospel net will be filled with precious souls for Christ.

Turn first to the Lord, and ask Him to direct you as to where is the best place to cast the net, then ask Him to give you moral courage and strength to go where He would have you go; to do that which He would have you to do, and your life will be a blessing to God, to your fellow-men and a great satisfaction to yourself.

GOLDEN THOUGHTS.

A reputation for goodness is no guarantee against sin. Jehoshaphat was an excellent man, but he fell under temptation.

Men are more in danger of sinning in prosperity than in adversity. Israel had been warned by Moses that when they "had eaten and should be full" they would forget God.

God restores the man who having sinned proves the genuineness of his repentance by acts of personal devotion and ministry.

True repentance, like that of the king of Judah, is prompt, thorough, personal, influential, and far reaching in its effects.

The function of a judge in human society is very important and dignified. All judges need the prayers of Christian people to aid them in the discharge of their duties.

Every man, whether prince or peasant, has some public influence which he is in duty bound to exert for God and righteousness.

The strongest men fail at certain points. When Baasha attacked him, Asa sought help not from the Lord, but from Benhadad. Until this life ends not even the most godly man can afford to neglect the divinely appointed means for resisting temptation.

Every man is responsible for his own

transgressions, no matter how much of evil heredity he may have unwillingly acquired from ancestors.

"SIR, WE WOULD SEE JESUS."

"I wish," says a woman of God, "that more ministers had the courage of the young man who received a call immediately after he left the theological seminary. He had graduated from his college with honors, and then prepared for the ministry. He was very much elated at his call to fill a pulpit so soon after graduation. He started on Sunday morning with his manuscript to preach his first sermon. As he approached the pulpit he saw the words, made with scarlet pinks on a bank of white pinks, behind the pulpit, 'Sir, we would see Jesus!' The Holy Ghost did his work on the conscience of the young preacher. He gave out the hymn, the congregation sang, and then, before kneeling, he said: 'I answered your call. I am your minister. I came to your church this morning with my sermon, but I cannot read it. All that I can see are the burning words you have placed for me to look at—'Sir, we would see Jesus.' 'O my people,' he exclaimed, 'how can I show him to you when I have not seen him myself? But bear with me. I will seek him. I will see him, and then I will show him to you.' And then he prayed, and the people wept, and they all prayed, 'show me thyself! I beseech thee, show me thy glory.' Need I tell you that the people saw him? Oh, how hungry the people are for Jesus! And it the ministers knew him (not about him), the people would see him."

The Germs of Catarrh

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Darts of Satan may be used to drive us to God.

It may be only a trifling cold, but neglect it and it will fasten its fangs in your lungs, and you will soon be carried to an untimely grave. In this country we have sudden changes and must expect to have coughs and colds. We cannot avoid them, but we can effect a cure by using Bickel's Anti-Consumptive Syrup, the medicine that has never been known to fail in curing coughs, colds, bronchitis and all affections of the throat, lungs and chest.

Practise strict temperance, and in your transactions remember the final account.

Nine Times Out of Ten Painkiller (Perry Davis') will be found to fill your needs as a household remedy. Used as a liniment for stiffness and taken internally for all bowel complaints. Avoid substitutes.

Employ leisure in study, and always have some work on hand.

Ignorance is a Curse.—"Know thyself" is a good admonition, whether referring to one's physical condition or moral habits. The man who is acquainted with himself will know how to act when any disarrangement in his condition manifests itself. Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil is a cheap and simple remedy for the eradication of pain from the system and for the cure of all bronchial troubles.