

1940



THESE SIXTY YEARS

“THE CHURCHMAN. A monthly Magazine. Conducted by Clergymen and Laymen of the Church of England.”

Such is the frontispiece of the first volume of THE CHURCHMAN : and as the page is turned we find the date of the first number, “October 1879”.

THE CHURCHMAN therefore reached its Diamond Jubilee with our last issue, October 1939. In humility we only claimed that to be the fifty-third year of the New Series. But, however that may be, we are glad that it was under the able editorship of the Rev. G. F. Irwin, D.D. that the sixtieth milestone was passed. Considering that he has guided the message and policy of THE CHURCHMAN for over thirty years, that is for half its life, this was most appropriate.



AND NOW as we take up the task, the frontispiece of that first volume cheers us, “Conducted by Clergymen and Laymen”. We are grateful to the godly and able men who have offered to assist in carrying on the high standard which has been set. In this first number of the sixty-first year, we are particularly grateful to the Lord Bishop of Gloucester (and the Baptist Board) for the use of his valuable paper on “The Teaching of the Church of England”. We are proud too, to include the paper by “Epaphroditus”, who, as his great predecessor has “gambled with his life” for the Gospel, this time in Germany.

We crave the prayers of all readers that by the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit THE CHURCHMAN may still continue to be for the Glory of God, the blessing of the Church and the spread of the Kingdom of Christ.

SIR SAMUEL HOARE, when addressing the men of an Oxford College in his capacity as Chancellor, chose for his subject "The Balance of Life". The conclusion drawn was that the balance of life can only be maintained if a man keeps in view the inevitable end, which we call death. The thought reminds us of Belshazzar, "Thou art weighed in the balances". He was found wanting because he had lived wholly in the physical realm without thought for the spiritual. A life "lighter than Vanity" has no purchasing value in heavenly riches.

No one will deny that self-examination and re-collection are a wise safeguard of the soul. It is equivalent in the spiritual sphere to that simple advice, "Try your weight". Weight is the index of health, and health is the measure of life. In this number we present the self-analysis to which a Scottish pastor subjected himself. In this matter our fathers were wiser than we are. In these days of hurry, because we do not make time for this, are we not losing our intimacy with God and our ability to help others?



WHAT IS GOOD for the individual is good also for the corporate life of the Church. When was that corporate life last weighed? When were the various activities, the magazines, the committees, the services, the societies, the correspondence, the differences, the divisions, the campaigns, the finance, the machinery, the faith and the unbelief the love and the hate, the hope and the fear—when were these last put into the pan of Time and weighed against the pan of Eternity? What lasting value has each? Has our Church life become mere paper money or is the Church still on the gold standard?

The articles which follow will help to assess this. They are not intended simply as food for the intellect but as a sword for the conscience and fuel for the heart. To bring these thoughts to a practical issue, we urge you also to study, "Evangelicals at the Cross Roads," which will appear in the February number of the *Church Gazette*, where it has been put, in the hope that it will be a wider challenge. It is written by One-of-them, particularly to the Clergy.

The last Book of the Bible begins with the seven-fold warning to the Churches, "I know thy works"; and it ends with the warning to the individual, "My reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be". In both cases the works are weighed to test whether they are hay or gold.

Is our teaching and our evangel found wanting when put in the balances against the eternal Word of God? Is a love wanting which cannot break down the wall of partition between brethren so that they may partake together of the Lord's hospitality? Does the loyalty to Christ about which we talk tally with the reproach we are willing to endure? Do the advantages we get through being Christians and clergy outweigh the cross we carry? Do we value our respectability more than the mud of the trenches?



WORKS NOT DONE PRIMARILY for the Glory of God, not linked in faith to the Saviour, not wrought in the Power of the Spirit can neither justify the Church nor the individual. Such works do not bear the hall-mark of the Grace of God and they will not abide the fire.

What then is the hall-mark of all true Christian work? If the Master came into the world to save sinners, and the Apostles were sent into all the world to do the same, surely all God-inspired activity must always be planned with that objective.

This is a practical question. It has eternal importance for ourselves and still more for those to whom we are sent. It should be constantly faced by the Church, her committees and societies. What better moment than this, the start not only of a new year but also of a new decade? If but a few will embrace the truth we have tried to express then the Church may once more regain the proofs of her Apostleship. Those proofs will bear the very marks of the Lord Jesus. We shall be a loving, praying, battling, suffering Church: a mighty instrument in the hands of Almighty God. Where are those few?