

WHAT ARE WE DOING WITH CHRIST.

We spend our days settling questions. Acts of the will make up life. Our hours are filled with successions of decisions. The Lord Jesus Christ confronts us every moment. We are unceasingly required to decide what we will do with him. We are always in the position of Pilate, when he asked: "What shall I then do unto Jesus?" The cry of the mob in reply was:—"Let him be crucified." Pilate had to decide. So have we. We have to do it constantly. We know Christ's claims on us. He demands at our hands, and does it in love, that we comply with them. We either do it or we do not. We know what we do. There is no neutrality.

The world about us is the mob that raged about Pilate. As the mob before Pilate was clamorous for a decision, so the world demands one from us. Christ all the while patiently and tenderly looks upon us as He did on that court scene, and asks what will ye do unto Me? We must either accept or reject Him, confess or deny Him.

Every succeeding decision of every life has to do in this way with Christ. His cause, His name. Covetous deeds, unholiness, aspirations, gratifying self-assertion, following in the way of a sinful world, are cries for a crucified Christ. Those who lose their first love and fall under the power of sin may be said to crucify the Lord afresh—act virtually like the mob that shouted their demands in Pilate's ears. The way of doing it may be less coarse and open, less bold and brutal, yet as truly wilful and real. "They are muffled echoes, to use the language of another, of the savage cries of crucifixion, heard in the streets of Jerusalem nineteen centuries ago—the tragedy of Golgotha re-enacted in the heart and life by the confessed Christian, with a name to live yet dead.

The Church is the body of Christ. He who assaults and insults it assaults and insults Christ. Disregard for the Church is surrendering Christ to the world—the mob, that clamors for His overthrow. The means of grace—all that are needed—are provided, and we are under obligation to use them. Every time we act without their use we reject Christ and insult the Holy Spirit. We must stand up for Jesus, or against Him. And we must do it everywhere, and continually.—Presbyterian Standard.

GIFTS OF HEALING.

Peter's shadow had healing power in it. The sick upon whom it rested even for a moment, as he passed by, became strong and well, and rose up cured and happy. There are those in every community who carry with them, wherever they go, a like influence of healing and blessing. They bear into a sick room a delicate sympathy which not only enters into the experience of the suffering, but puts new cheer and hope into the heart of the inspiring words. They speak encouraging and cheering words, their face has in it a message of cheer wherever it appears. They bring some promise of God, some word of hope and encouragement. The discouraged man they meet is made to feel not only that he has found a friend who is truly interested in him, but also that, after all, his case is not so hopeless as he imagined it to be, and that he need not despair. He is ready to try again. It is a blessed thing to carry such cheer and sympathy to despondent hearts.—Forward.

The surest method of arriving at a knowledge of God's eternal purposes about us is to be found in the right use of the present moment. God's will does not come to us in the whole, but in fragments, and generally in smaller fragments. It is our business to piece it together, and to live it into one orderly vocation.—F. W. Faber.

THEY SHALL NO MORE GO OUT.

By Kate Tucker Good.

They shall no more go out: O ye
Who speak earth's farewells through
your tears,
Who see your cherished ones go forth
And come not back through weary
years;
There is a place, there is a shore,
From which they shall go out no more.
They shall no more go out: O ye
Whose friends have journeyed farther
yet,
Whose loved will not return again
For all your pleading or regret;
They wait you at the sheltered door
From which they shall go out no more.

No chariot wheel rolls from those gates;
No bridled steed impatient stands;
No stately caravan moves forth
To cross through silent, desert lands;
No swelling sail, no dropping oar;
Rejoice, they shall go out no more!

BE NOT DISCOURAGED.

Many Christians are depressed and disquieted because they are not, as they fear, growing in grace. The following considerations should give them comfort:

To see and lament our decrease in grace indicates not only the life of grace, but its growth. As it is a sign a man is recovering and getting strength when he feels his weakness, so it is a step forward in grace to see our imperfections. The more the Spirit shines in the heart, the more evil it discovers. A Christian thinks it worse with him than it was; whereas, his grace may not have declined, but only his light have become greater.

If a Christian does not increase in one grace, he may in another; if not in knowledge, he may in humility. If a tree does not grow so much in the branches, it may in the root; and to grow downwards in the root is a good growth.

A Christian may grow less in affection when he grows more in judgment. As the musician, when he is old, though his fingers are stiff, plays on the instrument with more art and judgment than in his youth, so a Christian may not have so much affection in duty as at the time of his conversion; but he is more solid in religion, and more settled in his judgment than he was before.

A Christian may think he does not increase in grace because he does not increase in gifts; whereas, there may be a decay of natural powers, the memory and other faculties, when there is not a decay of grace. Powers may be impaired when grace is improved.

A Christian may increase in grace, yet not be sensible of it. The seed may grow in the earth when we do not perceive it to spring up, and grace may grow, during our spiritual gloom, and not be perceived.

Christians, therefore, should not yield to despondency because they are not conscious of making advance in the divine life. The sun is reaching his meridian, even when clouds intercept his beams, and it is the assurance of a faithful God, that the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Affliction is the good man's shining scene:

Prosperity conceals his brightest ray:
As night to stars, woe lustre give to man.

—Young.

No superior, whether master, parent, husband or magistrate, can make obligatory on us either to do what God forbids, or not to do what God commands.

An old man was dying who had long served Christ, when one asked him: "Can you rest a little now, father?" "Dear child," he said, "it is all rest; for the everlasting arms are underneath me."

LESSONS FROM BIRDS AND FLOWERS.*

By Robert E. Speer.

Our Lord's praise of birds and flowers was for their lack of care. He felt no anxiety himself. He did from moment to moment what his Father gave him to do. Not a thought of repining or regret for the past ever came to him. For the morrow and what it would bring he had no care. He urged upon his disciples the same freedom from worry. Not that men were not to think of the future. He thought about it. He told his disciples what it was to bring him. Long in advance he saw the shadow of the cross upon his pathway. But he was at rest. He would ever do himself what was right. God would never do aught else than what was right. What, then, was there to fear? The birds and flowers were kept by God. So, also, would his children be. Let us then learn from birds and flowers the lesson of trust.

Birds and flowers fulfil their appointed ends. In the case of birds of prey we do not understand that end. It is part of the whole great problem of evil and pain. But the birds of prey and the poisonous plants are few. The great hosts of birds and flowers fulfil innocent missions. It is man with his freedom who rebels and disobeys. But we say, "Nature obeys because she cannot do otherwise, but man is free." Exactly so. God made man after his own likeness,—free,—free to fulfil his end, or free to deny his end. That it is his glory, that he can refuse to choose the lower, which he is free to choose, and choose the higher, which he is free not to choose.

The home of the birds is in the air, and the life of the plant is in the sun. It is upwards that they look. They are not conscious of their Creator, but it is toward him that their life is turned.

"Rivers to the ocean run,
Nor stay in all their course:
Fire ascending seeks the sun;
Both speed them to their source:
So my soul, derived from God,
Pants to view His glorious face,
Forward tends to His abode,
To rest in His embrace."

The bird and the flower are small things, but great mysteries are in them. Each reproduces after its kind and after no other kind. Each speaks of a marvel of wisdom in creation which no method or process of creation can make less. If we fully understand any of the smallest plants, we should understand all.

"Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of crannies;
Hold you here, root and all, in my hand
Little flower,—but if I could understand
What you are, root and all and all in all,
I should know what God and man is."

Birds and flowers meet their tragedies. In the autumn frosts the flowers die. In the autumn frosts the birds die of starvation or cold. Who hears any complaint? They meet their tragedies silently. "But," it is said, "they cannot complain." Well, we who can, can also refrain if we will. We meet no more tragic ends than they meet, and we can understand them and we know that we shall survive them. Why, then, do we murmur? Nature meets death when it comes, as God's children ought to meet whatever befalls them.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

Mon.—Doves and purity (Matt. 23: 16, 17).
Tues.—Eagles and strength (Exod. 19: 4-6).
Wed.—Vultures and corruption (Matt. 24: 23-25).
Thurs.—The rose and beauty (Song of Sol. 2: 1-7).
Fri.—The lily and purity (Song of Sol. 6: 1-3, 9-11).
Sat.—The thistle, uselessness (Matt. 7: 16-19).
* Y. P. Topic, Sunday, May 23, 1909. (Luke 12: 24-28, Union meeting with the Juniors).