

## WHEN AND WHY SHOULD WE DECIDE?

There can be no doubt as to the time of deciding the most important question in life—the most imperative duty—the most exalted blessedness.

1. Christ calls us now. When the call for volunteers to fight the battles of the Empire in South Africa was sounded over Canada, there was an immediate response to the call to serve Queen and Empire. The call of the King of Heaven is sounding in our ears—"Son, daughter, give me thine heart." There must be an immediate response—"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.

2. Present duty must not be postponed. A true man, one who desires to meet all claims, human and divine, placed upon him, will recognize a present duty as one to be performed at once. Of course, one may put off a present duty, and say I will attend to it to-morrow. But in doing so he is disregarding the voice of conscience and of God—and this is a dangerous thing to do. The salvation of the soul demands immediate attention—a matter of such serious and vital importance must not be neglected nor postponed.

3. Inclination is uncertain. This reason for quick decision should be well considered. The human mind is a very mysterious thing—one day it is inclined to pursue a certain course, the next day another purpose displaces the inclination of the preceding day. "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." The Spirit calls now, conscience responds to the call, and awaits the will to execute the obligation which conscience imposes. If the will, the man, refuses to act after the repeated demands of conscience, conscience may refuse to respond the call—and inclination for the better life—to serve Christ, departs. Oh, the peril of delay!

4. The world needs true followers of Christ. What reserves any community from moral destruction? It is the good men who are in it. What prevents a nation from falling into decay? It is the good men in the nation. It is a fact of history that when evil greatly preponderates, destruction is near at hand. Hence the world needs good men, Christian men, to preserve it from moral dissolution, and to be a spiritual force for the world's betterment. Here is a worthy motive to decide for Christ—to save the world, for which Christ gave his life.

5. The Christian life is the only life worth living. The question has often been asked, "Is life worth living?" Some have answered in the negative, but the true Christian always answers in the affirmative. The life with God in it as a living, helping, spiritual force, is worth living. The man who can say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day," has an optimistic view of life, and existence becomes a delight.

But the life without God and without hope in the world—Blessed Saviour, save us all from a life like this now and forever more!

## PONDER WELL.

1. No business is worth your attention until you have settled this business which affects eternity.

2. How many dress come just after the insurance runs out! How many are going to confess Christ to-morrow—and die to-night?

3. It is a significant and undoubted fact that no one was ever sorry for making the Christian decision. The only grief of converts is that they did not make it earlier.

4. It will be remembered with shame by Americans that after France offered the United States the magnificent gift of the Bartholdi statue, it was a long

time before they provided a pedestal. God offers us the most magnificent of all gifts, and we debate for years whether we will take it.

## POINTS FOR THE PRESIDENT.

This meeting should be full of the revival spirit. Hold a prayer-meeting half an hour before the time of the League meeting, to ask God's blessing on the meeting, and to invoke the presence of the Holy Spirit that souls may decide to-night for Christ. Be in earnest, young people—God help you! Ask your pastor to be present if possible, to give you any needed help in presenting Christ's claims and drawing in the net. Make much use of the foregoing exposition—the truth is there.

## OCTOBER 12.—"FRUITFUL OR FRUIT-LESS"

John 15, 1-18, 10; Mark 11, 12-14.

## HOME READINGS.

Mon., Oct. 6. Planted by Christ. Matt., 21, 33-43.  
Tues., Oct. 7. All things in Christ. Phil., 4, 11-13.  
Wed., Oct. 8. Hewn down. Matt., 3, 7-12.  
Thurs., Oct. 9. Known by our fruit. John, 15, 1-10.  
Fri., Oct. 10. Salt, light. Matt., 5, 13-16.  
Sat., Oct. 11. A tree of life. Prov., 11, 25-30.

The words of Christ found in our topic scripture are full of significance and suggestion. They present one of the fundamental principles of the Christian religion, and one of the most precious experiences of the individual believer. "Follow me" must be made complete by "Abide in me," in order to have the two factors of true Christian experience. "Abide in me" suggests the possession of the Divine life in the soul. "Follow me" implies the conformity of inward spirit and outward conduct to the ideal presented by Jesus Christ. Without abiding there can be no successful following.

## AN ORIENTAL VINEYARD.

The language of Jesus carries us in imagination to one of the beautiful vineyards of Palestine. There are the vines planted in rows eight or ten feet apart, the branches projecting from the sides covered with luxuriant leaves, and, through the lattice of the foliage, as the gentle breeze blows, may be seen the luscious clusters of grapes. The vines extend from one to another, forming a line of festoons or rows of verdant arches. Those flourishing branches are what they are—strong, healthy, fruit-bearing—because they are in living union with the vine. They receive life and sap and nourishment from the vine, and hence they live, put on foliage, bear fruit, and flourish. But what are those heaps of cast-off branches, withered and dead, lying about the vineyard? Ah, I am the vine, ye are the branches! Believers have strength, and fruit-bearing qualities because they abide in Christ for life and constant spiritual nourishment. Separated from Him, they are like the withered and dead branches, which, being useless, are gathered and destroyed.

## WHAT ABIDING IN CHRIST SUGGESTS.

There are many useful lessons for young Christians, as Andrew Murray suggests, in this allegory of the Great Teacher, and, if they are properly learned, they will lead to right views of the Christ life.

1. Abiding in Christ is a life of absolute dependence. The branch has nothing—it depends upon the vine for everything. If the young believer would only learn every moment of the day to depend on Christ, everything would come out right. When the Christian thus depends on God, God grants his Holy Spirit to fulfil the trust of that dependence—the

Holy Spirit as a continuous presence and power; for remember the relation between the vine and the branches is such that daily, hourly, unceasingly, the living connection is maintained. The sap does not flow for a time and then stop, but from moment to moment the life of the vine flows with the branches. And just so, Epworth Leaguers, our Lord wants you to take the position as a worker, and hour by hour, and step by step, in every duty you have to perform, abide implicitly in Christ as one who feels utter helplessness without him. Dependence upon God through Christ by the Holy Spirit is the secret of all power in Christian service. May that power be yours.

2. Abiding in Christ is a life of deep restfulness. If the little branch could think and speak, and if we could ask the branch this question, "Come, branch of the vine, tell me, I want to learn from thee how I can be a true branch of the Living Vine," what would it answer? The reply would be: "Man, I know you have much strength and wisdom given to you, but I have one lesson for you to learn. The first thing you need is to come and rest in your Lord Jesus. That is what I do. Since I grew out of that vine I have spent years and years, and all I have done is just to rest in the vine. When the springtime came I had no anxious thought or care. The vine began to pour its sap into me, and to give the bud and leaf. And when the time of summer came, in the great heat I trusted the vine to bring moisture to keep me fresh. And in the time of harvest my grapes ripened by the help of the vine; and if you would be a true branch of Christ, just rest in him, let him do all the divine work in you, and for you." You say, "won't that make me slothful?" It will not. No one who learns to rest upon the living Christ can become slothful, for the closer your contact with Christ the more of the spirit of his zeal and ardor will be borne in upon you. Begin to work for Christ with entire dependence upon him, and add to that a deep restfulness in the Saviour whom you trust and love.

3. Abiding in Christ is a life of much fruitfulness. The great Teacher repeated the word fruit often in speaking this parable to his disciples. He spoke first of fruit, then of more fruit, and then of much fruit. Yes, Christians are called to bear not only fruit, but much fruit. And in this we glorify God—"Herein is my father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Christ opened the parable by saying, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman." He who will watch over the connection between Christ and the branches is God; and it is in the power of God, through Christ, we are to bear fruit. O Epworth Leaguers! the world needs more workers; but not only more workers, but the world needs that the workers should have a new power—the power of God through the Holy Spirit in the soul. There is wanting the close connection between the worker and the heavenly Vine. Christ, the heavenly Vine, has power to provide heavenly fruit on earthy ground—the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. So, we must be connected with Him by living faith in order to produce this fruit. There must be a good deal of work for Christ that is not the fruit of the heavenly Vine. The fruit of which the Saviour speaks means the life and love and power and Spirit of the Son of God within the human soul. As the vine does its work in its life in its own peculiar sap to the branch, so Christ gives the Holy Spirit to all true believers, and then they will bear much fruit. Lord Jesus, I pray thee let thy Spirit flow through me in all my work for thee!

4. Abiding in Christ is a life of close communion. What has the branch to do? You know that significant word