

rested in the shade before the inn. For a time he listened silently to the talk, and then joined in saying, "You must strike!"

"Strike against what?" asked the peasants.

"Against poverty!" answered the young man, "and the weapon with which to strike is work."

"Well said! Sensibly spoken!" laughed the peasants.

"It would have been well for me had I always been as sensible," continued the stranger, "but I used to be an idle rogue. I was strong and healthy, but I would not work, and if now and then I was obliged to do anything, I was off at once to the alehouse, and like lightning the money was out and the brandy was in. I went from place to place—that means, that everywhere I was turned away, for no master wants a loafer about. I'd soon had enough of farm service, and then I went about to fairs and public houses as a fiddler. Wherever anyone would hear me, I scraped my violin, but with all my scraping I was never able to get a whole shirt to my back. Soon I grew tired of music and then tried begging. I went up and down the country, but most doors were shut in my face. People said a healthy young fellow like I was ought to work. That enraged me. I grumbled that God had not made me a rich man, and I was envious of all who were better off than myself. I would have liked to turn the world upsidedown that I might have been able to lord it over the rich. One day I went into an inn, sat down in a corner, and began muttering my begging speeches. At a table not far from me sat a gentleman (he is, as I afterwards heard, a writer of books); he kept glancing at me and I kept glancing at him, for I thought he would be sure to give me a good alms, and so he did. I'm spending it still."

"What was it?" asked the men, who had listened attentively.

"He came up to me and asked me about my early life. I told him I had been a farm servant, and sent from place to place—in short, I told him everything. He listened quietly, shook his head, and at last said, 'Shew me your hands!' Astonished, I held out my hands; he examined them all over, pushed up my shirt sleeves, and again shook his head.

"What powerful hands! What strength there must be in those arms!" he said. "My lad, you must join in the war."

"In what war?" I asked.

"In a war against your misery?" he exclaimed in a loud voice. "You fool, you imagine you are poor—poor with such hands! What a mad idea! He only is poor who is sick in body or in mind. You are healthy in body and in mind. Good heavens! with such hands, poor! Set your wits to work and reflect upon the treasure God has given you in your strong healthy limbs. Recover your senses and march forward in the war."

"Bravo! That was very good," laughed the peasants.

"And so I joined in the war," continued the young man. "I looked for a place, and now I am a farm servant as before—nothing better and no richer; but I am content and industrious, and I have served the same master these five years, and shall stay with him until one of us dies."—*From the German of Thekla von Gumpert.*

#### HOW WEEDS MULTIPLY.

Sixty thousand mullein seeds have been produced from a single stalk. Patient and careful counting have shewn that a single plant of purslane produces a million matured seeds. The counting is achieved by first counting the pods, then the seeds in a single pod. The seed from a single plant will furnish a seed for every square foot in twenty-three acres. If each of them produced a million seeds, then we should have the amazing amount of 1,000,000,000,000 seeds from one plant in two years.

The Bible uses weeds as its illustration of sin. A vivid illustration it is. Weeds pollute the air, exhaust the ground, destroy all useful vegetation, and spread with amazing rapidity. So does sin. It mars the moral atmosphere and surroundings of the man, it uses up the strength which might be used for good, it destroys his love for the good and noble in life, it influences his fellows in a million deleterious ways. Shall we not hate it? Shall we not dread it?

The suggestion which flows from these facts about the rapid multiplication of weeds is equally significant (or much more significant) with regard to sin. For

sin multiplies its influences with the same rapidity. Fallen human nature is a soil specially adapted to the growth and propagation of wickedness, and every sin planted in this soil will certainly bear thirty-fold, a hundred fold, or a thousand fold, unless restrained by the hand of God. And each one of these new plants will be a new seed-bearer, scattering in turn its evil influences, until the world would become (did not God restrain it) as full of evil as it was before the flood. For there is no remedy save the regenerating and sanctifying influences of God. *Christian Observer.*

#### EVENING, AND MORNING, AND AT NOON WILL I PRAY.

O God, abide with me,  
For darkness falls,  
And while I lay me down to sleep, to Thee  
My spirit calls,  
To Thee, to Thee:  
Do Thou be with me through the hours of night,  
Shine on my soul and make its darkness bright,  
Till I become, in Thy most blessed light,  
Like Thee, like Thee.

O God, abide with me,  
For morning shines,  
With it I rise and give myself to Thee,  
My soul inclines  
To Thee, O Lord:  
O guide me through the dangers of this day,  
Keep Thou my heart lest I be led astray,  
Keep Thou my tongue lest evil things I say,  
Nor heed Thy Word.

O God, abide with me,  
'Tis noontide now,  
O keep me watchful, waiting, Christ, for Thee.  
Nor, Lord, allow,  
Throughout the strife,  
That aught be suffered to usurp Thy place,  
Obscure the shining of Thy blessed face,  
Or hinder me to run the holy race  
That leads to life.

O God, abide with me,  
'Tis night once more,  
And now my soul sings hymns of praise to Thee,  
Whom I adore,  
And, longing, turns  
Her latest, as her earliest, thoughts to Thee,  
That Thou the first, and Thou the last, mayst be,  
Desiring in all things Thy hand to see,  
While life's lamp burns.

#### "MUST I JOIN THE CHURCH?"

This was, no doubt, an honest question in the inquirer, but it revealed an enormous weakness. It was a young person who asked the question as he was looking out from a world-life into the new life of a Christian. He had been loitering near the door a long time. He was often greatly moved towards entering. He had long ago learned what Christ taught as to the terms of discipleship. The cross, the yoke, the confession, were familiar terms—even threadbare in pulpit teaching, and yet ever requiring repetition. But this youth had marked out a by-way for himself. It was aside from the thoroughfare of common Christians. It was smooth, well shaded from the sun of trial, and pretty free from the hills of difficulty. His religion he thought to put away secretly in his heart. His charities should be known only to God. His confessions of Christ were to be so indirect and inferential that common people could hardly suspect the real secret of his life.

In some such state of mind as this our young friend saw his companions leaving him to join the Church. They were coming to the front of Christian living, and were going to find out what cross, if any, might lie in the path of open and honest discipleship. The flaw in his experience was revealed in the question at the head of this article. He had been smothering a Christian life, feeble enough at best, under the non-committalism of a secret religion.

Of course, there can be but one answer to the state of mind disclosed in this question. God may, indeed, make exceptions to the privileges of a Christian life. He may lay upon us what disabilities he will. But aside from such barriers, nothing is more sure than that real love to Christ is an outpushing, and not a secretive principle. God only knows in what shades it is possible for the plant of faith to live. He only can tell how sickly a Christian life may be, and yet be a Christian life. He only can tell us how little of courage and heartiness one may use, and yet creep into heaven. But the whole Bible is witness to the fact that Christ's type of religion is one which holds sincerity and purpose and pluck. The feeblest flower seed has to push hard against the overlying clay.

And if the world is to enjoy the odour of its blossom there must be quite a battle with scorching sun and sweeping storm.

The real religion of Jesus Christ goes beyond this question, ordinarily with a single bound. It is very sure that all the workings and successes of Christianity are achieved by another and a higher principle.

The remedy for such a questioner lies not in answering his query so much as in finding, deep down in his soul, a spring a nervous, spiritual principle—which pushes itself up and comes to the surface as unconsciously as the seed germ. The religion of Jesus Christ does not wait for a "must," because it is busied in asking, What may I do for Him who died for me? *Philadelphia Presbyterian.*

#### KEEP IN THE SCHOOL.

This is a law of Christian life which no one can neglect without loss. When such an intellect as that of St. Paul was brought to face the service of Christ it required special teaching. The Ethiopian eunuch could not understand the prophecy which he was reading until Philip explained it. The wisest worldly mind must enter the kingdom of heaven as a child. Many persons about entering upon a religious life seem but half conscious of their spiritual ignorance. They come up to the services and instructions of the church irregularly—being present at one opportunity and absent from another, thus losing often the very teaching intended for them.

There is not a better sign of the new life than a deep hungering for instruction. There is not a surer path towards religious growth than that which goes through every lesson. Real force of character resides in that conception of duty which consents to lose no opportunity. Irregularity in secular education makes a half-taught and a superficial scholar. The same course in spiritual culture leads to the same result. It is disheartening to see what defective Christian lives, what feeble and flabby examples, what sickly shams of religious character, come out of the half-schooling with which so many Christians content themselves. The church is God's school. All its ordinances, all its services go to make up the curriculum of religious education.

Half-doing is the bane of Christian life. It loosens the joints of the harness and opens the armour to let in the devil's arrows. Half-doing is worse to-day for Christianity than philosophical speculation. These free-thinkers are constantly fooling themselves, and are coming to spots which they can cross only on bridges of the most enormous credulity. A positive and honest Christian living will hold its own against speculation. One hundred persons eagerly seeking knowledge and honestly doing Christianity every day will put to flight a thousand philosophical doubters. Keep yourself in the school then, young Christian. Get every lesson. Be at every recitation. Shew an example of simple and steadfast sticking to it. Take your life purpose from Psalm cxix. 35: "I have stuck unto Thy testimonies," and see what wonderful strength will grow upon the life of any one who will begin, no matter where, and simply keep learning and keep doing the things which Christ is teaching us in the duties of church life.

If you do not wish to trade with the devil, keep out of his shop.—*Thomas Fuller.*

It is as hard to satirize well a man of distinguished vices, as to praise well a man of distinguished virtues.—*Swift.*

FLATTERY is often a traffic of mutual meanness, where, although both parties intend deception, neither is deceived.—*Colton.*

AN old clergyman said: "When I come to die I shall have my greatest grief and my greatest joy; my greatest grief that I have done so little for the Lord Jesus, and my greatest joy that the Lord Jesus has done so much for me."

AS to being prepared for defeat, I certainly am not. Any man who is prepared for defeat would be half defeated before he commenced. I hope for success, shall do all in my power to secure it, and trust to God for the rest. *Admiral Farragut.*

CHRISTIANITY is the true citizenship of the world, and universal peace, and the free exchange of all lands and tributes of their several peculiar goods and gifts, are possible only as all are grouped around, and united by, the cross of a common Redeemer and the hope of a common heaven.—*William R. Williams.*