

WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH JESUS?

What will you do with Jesus?
The words come low and sweet,
As tenderly He bids you
Lay your burdens at His feet.
We are poor, and weak, and sinful,
But His mercy's full and free;
What will you do with Jesus?
What shall the answer be?

What will you do with Jesus?
The words come low and clear,
'Tis the voice of God that speaketh,
In tones that all must hear.
Life immortal in the question,
Joy throughout eternity—
What will you do with Jesus?
What shall the answer be?

Think of the King of Glory,
Lord of heaven, to earth come down,
Of His life, so pure and holy,
Of His death, His cross and crown,
Of His divine compassion,
Of His sacrifice for thee—
What will you do with Jesus?
What shall the answer be?

THE WEEK OF PRACTICE.

[This story which appeared in the INTELLIGENCER two or three years ago, is republished now by request. It teaches needed lessons.]

The communion service of January was just over in the church at Sugar Hollow, and people were waiting for Mr. Parkes to give out the hymn. But he did not give it out; he laid his book down on the table, and looked about on his church.

He was a man of simplicity and sincerity, fully in earnest to do his Lord's work, and do it with all his might; but he did sometimes feel discouraged. His congregation was a mixture of farmers and mechanics; for Sugar Hollow was cut in two by Sugar Brook, a brawling, noisy stream that turned the wheel of many a mill and manufactory; yet on the hills around it there was still a scattered population eating their bread in the full perception of the primeval curse.

So he had to contend with the keen brain and sceptical comment of the men who piqued themselves on the power to hammer at theological problems as well as hot iron, with the jealousy and repulsion and bitter feeling that has bred the communistic hordes abroad and at home; while, perhaps, he had a still harder task to awaken the sluggish souls of those who used their days to struggle with barren hillside and rocky pasture for mere food and clothing, and their nights to sleep the dull sleep of physical fatigue and mental vacuity.

It seemed sometimes to Mr. Parkes that nothing but the trump of Gabriel could arouse his people from their sins, and make them believe on the Lord and follow his footsteps. To-day—no, a long time before to-day—he had mused and prayed till an idea took shape in his thought, and now he was to put in practice; yet he felt peculiarly responsible and solemnized as he looked about him and foreboded the success of his experiment. Then there flashed across him, as words of Scripture will come back to the habitual Bible-reader, the noble utterance of Gamaliel concerning Peter and his brethren when they stood before the council, "If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it." So with a sense of strength the minister spoke:

"My dear friends," he said, "you all know, though I did not give any notice to that effect, that this week is the Week of Prayer. I have a mind to ask you to make it for this once a Week of Practice instead. I think we may discover some things, some of the things of God, in this manner that a succession of prayer-meetings would not, perhaps, so thoroughly reveal to us. Now, when I say this, I don't mean to have you go home and vaguely endeavour to walk straight in the old way; I want you to take topics," as they are called, for the prayer-meetings. For instance, Monday is prayer for the temperance work. Try all that day to be temperate in speech, in act, in indulgence of any kind that is hurtful to you. The next day is for Sunday-schools; go and visit your scholars, such of you that are teachers, and try to feel that they are living souls to save. Wednesday is a day for fellowship-meeting; we are cordially invited to attend a union-meeting of this sort at Bantam. Few of us can go twenty-five miles to be with our brethren there; let us spend that day in cultivating our brethren here; let us go and see those who have been cold to us for some reason, heal up our breaches of friendship, confess our shortcomings one to another, and act as if, in our Master's words, 'all ye are brethren.'

"Thursday is the day to pray for the family relation; let us each try to do for our families on that day, in our measure, what the Lord is to his family, the Church, remembering the words, 'Fathers, provoke not your children to anger; 'Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.' These are texts rarely commented upon, I have noticed, in our conference meetings. We are more apt to speak of the obedience due from children and the submission and weakness our wives owe us, forgetting that duties are always reciprocal.

"Friday, the church is to be prayed for. Let us then each for himself try to act that day just as we think Christ our great Exemplar, would have acted in our places. Let us try to prove to ourselves and the world about us that we have not taken upon us his name lightly or in vain.

"Saturday is prayer-day for the heathen and foreign missions. Brethren, you know and I know that there are heathen at our doors here; let every one of you who will take that day to preach the gospel to some one who does not hear it anywhere else. Perhaps you will find work that ye know not of lying in your midst. And let us all on Saturday evening meet here again, and choose some one brother to relate his experience of the week. You who are willing to try this method, please to rise."

Everybody rose except old Amos Tucker, who never stirred, though his wife pulled at him, and whispered to him imploringly. He only shook his grizzled head and sat immovable.

"Let us sing the Doxology," said Mr. Parkes; and it was sung with full fervor. The new idea had roused the church fully; it was something fixed and positive to do; it was the lever-point Archimedes longed for, and each felt ready and strong to move a world.

Saturday night the church assembled again. The cheerful eagerness was gone from their faces; they looked downcast, troubled, weary—as the pastor expected. When the box for ballots was passed about, each one tore a bit of paper from the sheet placed in the hymn-books for that purpose and wrote on it a name.

The pastor said, after he had counted them:

"Deacon Emmons, the lot has fallen on you."

"I'm sorry for't," said the deacon, rising up and taking off his overcoat.

"I ha'n't got the best of records, Mr. Parkes, now I tell ye."

"That isn't what we want," said Mr. Parkes. "We want to know the whole experience of some one among us, and we know you will not tell us either more or less than what you did experience."

Deacon Emmons was a short, thick-set man, with a shrewd, kindly face and gray hair, who kept the village store, and had a well earned reputation for honesty.

"Well, brethren," he said, "I dunno why I shouldn't tell it. I am pretty well ashamed of myself, no doubt; but I ought to be, and may be I shall profit by what I've found out these six days back. I'll tell you just as it comes."

"Monday, I looked about me to begin with. I'm amazing fond of coffee, and it a'n't good for me—the doctor says it a'n't; but, dear me, it does set a man up good, cold mornings, to have a cup of hot, sweet tasty drink; and I ha'n't had the girl to refuse. I knew it made me what folks call nervous, and I call cross, before night come; and I knew I fetched on spells of low spirits when our folks couldn't get a word out of me—not a good one anyway; so I thought I'd try on that to begin with. I tell you it come hard. I hankered after that drink of coffee dreadful. Seemed as though I couldn't eat my breakfast without it. I feel to pity a man that loves liquor more'n I ever did in my life before; but I feel sure they can stop if they try, for I've stopped and I'm a-going to stay stopped."

"Well come to dinner, there was another fight. I do set by pie the most of anything. I was fetched up on pie, as you may say. Our folks always had it three times a day; and the doctor, he's been talkin' and talkin' to me about eatin' pie. I have the dyspepsy like everything, and it makes me useless by spells, and unreliable as a weather-cock. An' Dr. Drake he says there won't nothing help me but to diet. I was readin' the Bible that morning while I sat waiting for breakfast; for 'twas Monday, and wife was kind set back with washin' and all, and I come across that part where it says that the bodies of Christians are temples of the Holy Ghost. Well, thinks I, we'd ought to take care of 'em if they be, and see that they're kep' clean and pleasant, like the church; and nobody can be clean nor pleasant that has dyspepsy. But, come to pie, I feel as though I couldn't; and, lo ye, I didn't. I eat a piece right against my conscience; facin' what I knew I ought to do, I went and done what I ought not to do. I tell ye my conscience made music of me consider'ble, and I said then I wouldn't never sueer at a drinkin' man no more when he tripped up, I'd feel for him and help him, for I see just how it was. So that day's practice giv' out; but it learnt me a good deal more'n I knew before."

"I started out next day to look up my Bible-class. They haven't really tended up to Sunday-school as they ought to a long back; but I was busy here and there, and there didn't seem to be a real chance to

get to it. Well, 'twould take the evenin' to tell it all; but I found one real sick, been abed for three weeks, and was so glad to see me that I felt fair ashamed. Seemed as though I heered the Lord for the first time sayin', 'Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.' Then another man's old mother says to me before he comes in from the shed, says she, 'He's been a sayin' that if folks practised what they preached, you'd ha' come round to look him up afore now; but he reckoned you kinder looked down on mill-hands. I'm awful glad you come. Brethren, so was I! I tell you that day's work done me good. I got a poor opinion of Josiah Emmons now, I tell ye; but I learned more about the Lord's wisdom than a month o' Sundays ever showed me."

A smile he could not repress passed over Mr. Parkes' earnest face. The deacon had forgotten all external issues in coming so close to the heart of things; but the smile passed as he said:

"Brother Emmons, do you remember what the Master said? 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.'"

"Well, it's so," answered the deacon; "it's so right along. Why I never thought so much of my Bible-class, nor took no sech int'rest in 'em, as I do to-day—not since I begun to teach, I b'lieve they'll come more reg'lar now, too."

"Now, come fellowship-day. I thought that would be all plain sailin'; seemed as though I'd got warmed up till I felt pleasant towards everybody; so I went round seein' folks that was neighbors, and 'twas easy. But when I came home at noon, Philury says, says she, 'Squire Tucker's black bull is into th' orchard a-tearin' round, and he's knocked two lengths 'o fence down flat.' Well, the old Adam riz up then, you'd better believe. That black bull has been a-breaking into my lots ever sence we got in th' aftermath, and it's Squire Tucker's fence, and he don't make it bull strong, as he'd oughter; and that orchard was a young one jest comin' to bear, and all the new wood crisp as cracklin' with frost. You'd better b'lieve I didn't have much feller-feelin' with Amos Tucker. I jest put over to his house and spoke up pretty free to him, when he looked up and says, says he, 'Fellowship-meetin' day, ain't it, Deacon?' I'd rather he'd ha' slapped my face. I felt as though I should like to slip behind the door. I see pretty distinct what sort of life I'd been livin' all the years I'd been a professor, when I couldn't hold on to my tongue and my temper one day."

"Breth-er-en," interrupted a slow, harsh voice, somewhat broken with emotion. "I'll tell the rest on't. Josiah Emmons come round like a man an' a Christian right there. He asked me to forgive him, and not to think 'twas his fault of his religion, because 'twas his'n and nothin' else. I think more of him to-day than I ever done before. I was one that wouldn't say I'd practise with the rest of ye. I thought 'twas everlasting nonsense. I'd rather go to forty-nine prayer-meetin's than work at being good a week. I b'lieve my hope has been one of them that perish; it ha'n't worked, and I leave it behind to-day. I mean to begin honest, and it was seein' one honest Christian man fetched me round to't."

Amos Tucker sat down, and buried his grizzled head in his rough hands.

"Bless the Lord!" said the quavering tones of a still older man from a far corner of the house, and many a glistening eye gave silent response.

"Go on, Brother Emmons," said the minister.

"Well, when next day come, I got up to make the fire, and my boy Joe had forgot the kindlin'. I'd opened my mouth to give him 'jesse,' when I came over me sudden that this was the day of prayer for the family relation. I thought I wouldn't say nothin'. I jest fetched in the kindlin' myself; and when the fire burnt up good, I called wife."

"Dear me!" says she. 'I've got such a headache, 'Siah, but I'll come in a minnit.' I didn't mind that; for women are always havin' aches, and I was jest a-going to say so, when I remembered the text about not bein' bitter against 'em, so I says:

"Philury, you lay abed. I expect Emmy and me can get the vittles to-day."

"I declare, she turned over and give me such a look! why, it struck right in. There was my wife, that had worked for and waited on me twenty-odd year, most 'scart because I spoke kinder feelin' to her. I went out and fetched in the pail o' water she'd always drawn herself, and then I milked the cow. When I came in, Philury was up fryin' the potatoes, and the tears a-shinin' on her white face. She didn't say nothin', she's kinder still,

but she hadn't no need to. I felt a little meaner'n I did day before. But 'twan't nothin' to my condition when I was goin', towards night, down the sullen stairs for some apples, so as the children could have a roast, and I heard Joe up in the kitchen say to Emmy:

"I do, b'lieve, Em, pa's goin' to die."

"Why, Josiah Emmons, how you talk?"

"Well, I do; he's so everlastin' pleasant an' goodnatured, I can't but think that he's struck with death."

"I tell ye, brethren, I set right down on them sullen stairs and cried. I did, reely. Seemed as though the Lord had turned and looked at me jest as He did at Peter. Why, there was my own children never see me act real fatherly and pretty in all their lives. I'd growled and scolded and prayed at 'em, and tried to fetch 'em up; 'jest as the twig is bent the tree's inclined,' ye know; but I hadn't never thought that they'd got right and reason to expect I'd do my part as well as they their'n. Seemed as though I was findin' out more about Josiah Emmons' shortcomin's than was real agreeable."

"Come around Friday, I got back to the store. I'd kind o' left it to the boys the early part of the week, and things was a little cuterin'; but I did have sense not to tear around and use sharp words so much as common. I began to think 'twas gettin' easy to practice after five days, when some come Judge Herrick's wife after some cur'in calico. I had a han'some piece all done off with roses an' things, but there was a fault in the weavin'—every now and then a thin streak. She didn't notice it; but she was pleased with the figures on't, and said she'd take the whole piece. 'Well, jest as I was wrappin' of it up, what Mr. Parkes here said about tryin' to act jest as the Lord would in our place, came across me. Why, I turned as red as a beet, I know I did. It made me all of a tremble. There was I, a doorkeeper in the tents of my God, as David says, really cheatin', and cheatin' a woman. I tell ye, brethren, I was all of a sweat."

"Mis' Herricks," says I, "I don't b'lieve you've looked real close at this goods; 'tain't thorough wove," says I.

"So she didn't take it; but what fetched me was to think how many times I'd done sech mean, unreliable little things to turn a penny, and all the time sayin' and prayin' that I wanted to be like Christ. I kep' a-trippin' of myself up all day jest in the ordinary business; and I was a peg lower down when night come than I was a Thursday. I'd rather, as far as the hard work is concerned, lay a mile of four-foot stone wall, than undertake to do a man's livin' Christian duty for twelve workin' hours; and the heft of that is, it's because I ain't used to it, and I ought to be."

"So this mornin' come round, and I felt a mite more cherk. 'Twat missionary mornin', and seemed as if it was a sight easier to preach than to practice. I thought I'd best to older Mis' Vedder's. So I put a Testament in my pocket, and knocked at her door. Says I, 'Good mornin' ma'am,' and then I stopped. Words seem to hang, somehow. I didn't want to pop right out that I'd come over to try'n convert her folks. I hemmed and swattered a little, and finally I said, says I, 'We don't see you to meetin' very frequent, Mis' Vedder.'

"No, you don't!" ses she, as quick as a wink. 'I stay to home, and mind my business.'

"Well, we should like to hev' you come along with us and do ye good," says I, sort of conciliatin'.

"Look a here, Deacon," she snapped, 'I've lived alongside of you fifteen year, and you knowed I never went to meetin'; we ain't a pious lot, and you knowed it; we're poorer'n death and uglier'n sin. Jim he drinks and swears, and Malviny don't her letters. She knows a heap she hadn't ought to, besides. Now what are you a-comin' here to-day for, I'd like to know, and talkin' so glib about meetin'? Go to meetin'! I'll go or come jest as I please, for all you. Now get out o' this!"

"Why, she come at me with a broomstick! There wasn't no need out; what she said was enough. I hadn't never asked her nor her'n to so much as think of goodness before."

"Then I went to another place jest like that—I won't call no more names; and sure enough there was ten children in rags, the hull on 'em, and the man half drunk. He giv' it to me, too; and I don't wonder. I'd never lifted a hand to save nor save 'em before in all these years. I'd said consider'ble about the heathen in foreign parts, and give some little for to convert 'em, and I had looked right over the heads of them that was next door. Seemed as if I could hear Him say, 'These ought ye to have done, and not have left the other undone.' I couldn't face another soul to-day, brethren. I

come home, and here I be. I've been searched through and through and found wantin'. 'God be merciful to me a sinner!'"

He dropped into his seat, and bowed his head; and many another bent too. It was plain that the deacon's experience was not the only one among the brethren.

Mr. Payson rose, and prayed as he had never prayed before; the week of practice had fired his heart too. And it began a memorable year for the church in Sugar Hollow; not a year of excitement or enthusiasm but one when they heard their Lord saying as to Israel of old, "Go forward," and they obeyed his voice. The Sunday-school flourished; the church services were fully attended; every good thing was helped on its way; and peace reigned in their homes and hearts, imperfect, perhaps, as new growths are, but still an offshoot of the peace past understanding.

And another year they will keep another week of practice, by common consent.

TWO KINDS OF CARE.

St. Peter says: "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." The first care signifies anxiety, burden, something that divides thought and harrasses the soul. The second care, that which God has for us, signifies regard, keeping us upon his heart, restraining us from evil, following us day by day to succor us in our ignorance and weakness.

How totally unlike are these two kinds of care! One is altogether unnecessary and destructive. On the other hand, God's care for us is a regard that his nature must bear for us so long as he is God, and is essentially saving and life-giving to the whole universe. Ours is the result of a diseased nature. His care is the brightness of infinite purity, the outgushing of tender pity, the exponent of his great love, the object lesson by which he instructs us in righteousness.

How blessed it is that we can rest our weary souls on him! We need not wait for preparation if we are only sincere and earnest. Let us come to him, even while distracted and oppressed. His care for us is, if possible, greater at such times. If we wait and suffer alone, our distresses will become increasingly grievous.

Nor are we to lay at his feet a portion of our heavy burden only. His care extends to everything, whether of temporal or spiritual interests. How many err just here! They seem to think that God does not wish to know about the innumerable little perplexities of their lives, and so, in failing to embrace their full privilege, confidence in him is weak when the deeper trials are brought to his notice.

One thing, however, must never be forgotten, namely, God's care for his children does not always deliver them from trial. That very care proposes to secure their perfection of character. This is the first and supreme object in his view. When this Divine purpose can be best attained, in the wisdom of God, through trial, his blessed care over us not only sanctions, but even sends, the sharp "thorn" or prepares the "fiery furnace." "Casting all your care upon him" is not, therefore, to insure exemption from trying circumstances. Rather, it is to feel the everlasting arms about us, to hear his words of comfort and promise, and to know that in this way the power of Christ is the fruit of our earthly trial.

NOW IS THE TIME.

Perhaps there is now a "thy, solitary, serious thought" in your heart about becoming a Christian. If you let it alone it may fly away like a bird through a cage door left open, and may never come back. Or else a crowd of business cares and plans, or perhaps a pressure of social invitations will flock in, and the good thought be smothered to death. You have smothered just such blessed thoughts before. The thought in your heart is to become a Christian now; and the great bell rings out: "Now is the accepted time; behold! now is the day of salvation." No soul was ever yet saved, and no good deed was ever done to-morrow. Be careful, dear friends, lest to-morrow find you beyond the world of probation.—Dr. T. L. Cuyler.

Give me these links: first, sense of need; second, desire to get; third, belief that, though he withhold for a while, he loves to be asked; and fourth, belief that asking will obtain—give me these links, and the chain will reach from earth to heaven, bringing all heaven down to me, or bearing me up into heaven.—Dr. Guthrie.

The more we know, the greater our thirst for knowledge. The water-lily, in the midst of waters, opens its leaves and expands its petals at the first patter of showers, and rejoices in the rain-drops with a quicker sympathy than the parched shrub in the sandy desert.—Coleridge.

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