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THE CHRISTIAN TREASURY

A FAMILY MISCELLANY

Contents.

	PAGE
THE SPIRITUAL RELATION OF CHRISTIAN WORK TO THE CHURCH AND THE INDIVIDUAL. By REV. ROBERT SMITH, A.M.,	1
WHAT MUST I DO TO BE LOST?	5
POETRY: WHERE HAS LITTLE BABY GONE?	5
A PORTION FOR THE AGED: "HEAVEN IS BEAUTIFUL"—A GLAD SURPRISE—THE LORD IN ALL, AND ALL IN THE LORD.	6, 7
HOW THE LITTLE MARSTONS KEPT NEW-YEAR'S DAY,	8
WHY I AM AN OLD MAID. By S. B. CHAPS. I., II.,	9, 10
FRUIT-BEARING. A SHORT SERMON FOR CHILDREN,	11
A DAILY PORTION.	12, 24, 36, 47, 48, 59, 60
MAKING MEMORIES. By J. R. MILLER, D.D.,	13
LUTHER AND HIS REFORMING ACTIVITY IN OPPOSITION TO CATHOLICISM, UP TO 1525. By JULIUS KOESTLIN, D.D.,	14, 26
DOCTRINAL PREACHING. By REV. J. M. FERRIS, D.D.,	17
THE CHILD OF THE SEA; OR, FOR LOVE OF ME. Chaps. I., II.,	18, 30
WARMING THE COCKLES OF HER HEART,	20
"SUNRISE THOUGHTS." By MABEL TURNER,	21
ACTIONS GERMINATIVE,	23
"THE SET TIME,"	25
A DREAM THAT WAS NOT ALL A DREAM,	29
FINDING WORK,	32
WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT GIVING. By WM. M. TAYLOR, D.D.,	34
SUPPOSE,	35
POETRY: THE THREE-FOLD PLEDGE. By C. MAY. Parts I., II., III., 35, 46,	58
REVIVALS,	37
STOP BEFORE YOU BEGIN. By THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.,	38
THE TREASURY HYMNAL: LIGHT OF LIGHT,	40
THE BIBLE AND THE MONUMENTS. By WM. HAYES WARD, D.D.,	41
THE REWARD OF GIVING. By WILLIAM M. TAYLOR, D.D., New York,	44
ARE THE CHILDREN SAFE? By J. R. MILLER, D.D.,	45
STRANGE USE FOR A STOOL,	46
POETRY: REST IN THE LORD. By MARGARET E. SANGSTER,	47
MARTIN LUTHER. By PROFESSOR T. W. CHAMBERS, D.D., New York,	49
SOME NEW BOOKS,	50
GRANDFATHER BURRINGTON'S STORY. By ERNEST GILMORE,	53
BELIEVING, BUT NOT UNDERSTANDING,	56
INTELLIGENCE,	57

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CHRISTIAN TREASURY.

CONTAINING

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MINISTERS AND MEMBERS OF VARIOUS
EVANGELICAL DENOMINATIONS.

THE SPIRITUAL RELATION OF CHRISTIAN WORK TO THE
CHURCH AND THE INDIVIDUAL.

BY REV. ROBERT SMITH, A.M., CORSOCK, BY DALBEATTIE.



LN the general aspect of the case, it is readily admitted by all that a mutual connection does exist between life and work. The difficulty lies in realising its importance, and especially the importance of the fact that the connection is not one-sided, but in the strictest sense mutual.

Life is necessary to work, but work is equally necessary to life. And this holds good not only in principle, but in degree. Work gives back to life as much as it first received from it. The law of the physical world—that action and reaction are equal and contrary—is of equal force in the spiritual. The hammer delivers a blow to the anvil, but the anvil returns it back again to the hammer. And so it is with all things that are in a true sense mutually related. The cause becomes an effect, and the effect is turned into a cause alternately. So it is, as between *truth* and *life*. The knowledge of truth produces life—life in its best form as a living experience—but this last is the key to all further increase of knowledge. So also does it stand with the second pair, *life* and *work*, with which we have at present specially to do. The first condition of Christian work is true Christian life; but the first condition of the maintenance and increase of true Christian life is faithful Christian work.

Nor is this reflexive influence of work on the life from which it springs to be regarded

as incidental, or only of comparative value. The work must, of course, vary in form according to the circumstances of each individual. But in some form or other it is an essential element of his Christian calling. Without it, his spiritual life can never be healthful or strong. And, indeed, its entire absence would argue the extinction of life altogether.

As hinted already, there are two pairs of reciprocal relations to be attended to here. Truth, life, and work are all co-related. Of these, truth is related to life, and life to truth; and, again, life is related to work, and work to life.

It thus appears that the life occupies a middle position, being related to truth on the one hand, and to work on the other. Truth, entering the soul through the channel of faith in the power of the Holy Ghost, kindles the new life there; but by the same power it issues forth again, and appears in all works of holiness and love.

But this circuit of life must be complete. There must be a reverse as well as a direct current; and if it be interrupted in either direction, the flow of life ceases. Now, it is admitted on all hands that spiritual life must be nourished and sustained by Christian truth. But I doubt whether the idea be so familiar to our minds as it ought to be, that it is equally dependent on Christian work for its growth and strength.

Two utterances of our Lord concerning His own life possess a deep significance in relation

when they have received Christ Himself into their hearts, they will be impelled to give—*impelled*, not *compelled*, for the delight and the duty will coincide; or, rather, the duty will be merged in the delight. So we come round

to the point from which we set out—namely, that a revived church will soon become a giving church, and a giving church is the fore-herald of a converted world.—*Independent*.

ARE THE CHILDREN SAFE?

BY J. E. MILLER, D.D.



WHEN our children go out from us in the morning to the day's duties, or in the evening to the night's scenes and pleasures, we know not to what terrible dangers they will be exposed before we see them again. We mourn for our dead, but if they have died in the arms of Christ they are safe. No danger ever can reach them. They have no more battles to fight. Do we never weep for our living, when we remember to what perils they are exposed?

'Lord, we can trust Thee for our holy dead;
They, underneath the shadow of Thy tomb,
Have entered into peace; with bended head
We thank Thee for their rest, and for our
lightened gloom.'

'But, Lord, our living, who on stormy seas
Of sin and sorrow still are tempest-tossed!
Our dead have reached their haven, but for these—
Teach us to trust Thee, Lord, for these, our
loved and lost.'

'For these we make our passion-prayer at night;
For these we cry to Thee through the long day.'

Yes, our dead in Christ are safe. They are folded away under the shadow of God's wings.

'What is death, father?' 'The rest, my child,
When the strife and toil are o'er;
The angel of God, who, calm and mild,
Says we need fight no more;
Who, driving away the demon band,
Bids the din of the battle cease—
Takes banner and spear from our trembling hand,
And proclaims an eternal peace.'

The children that we laid in Christ's arms in infancy, in the sleep we call death, are for ever safe. It is our living that are in peril. It is life that is hard and full of danger; it is for our living that we need to be anxious, lest they be defeated in the field, where foes are thick and battles sore.

Where shall we find protection for these tender lives save in the keeping of the almighty Saviour? We cannot shelter them ourselves. We cannot make our home doors strong enough to shield them. We cannot protect them even by love's tenderness, or by the influence of beautiful things—of art, of luxury, of music, or by the refinements of the truest and best culture. From amid all these things children's souls are every day stolen away. All history and all experience proves that nothing but the

religion of Christ can be a shelter for our loved ones from this world's dangers and temptations.

A friend was telling of a wonderful little flower which he discovered high up on the Rocky Mountains. In a deep fissure among the rocks, one midsummer day, he found the snow still lying unmelted, and on the surface of the snow he saw a lovely flower. When he looked closely he perceived that it had a long, delicate stem, white as a tuberose, coming up through the deep snow from the soil in a crevice of the rock underneath. The little plant had grown up in spite of all obstacles, its tender stem unharmed by the cold drifts, until it blossomed out in loveliness above the snow. The secret was its root in the rich soil in the cleft of the rock, from which it drew such fulness of life that it rose through all to perfect beauty. Fit picture is that little flower of every tender child-life in this world. Over it are chilling masses of evil and destructive influences; and, if it ever grows up into noble and lovely character, it must conquer its way by the force of its own inward life, until it stands crowned with beauty, with every obstacle beneath it. This it can do only through the power of the divine grace within. Its root must be homed in the sheltered warmth of piety, in the cleft of the Rock of Ages. Those who grow up in truly Christian homes, imbibing in their souls from infancy the very life of Christ, will be strong to overcome every obstacle and resist every temptation. The influence of godly example, the memories of the home altar, the abiding power of holy teachings, and grace of God descending perpetually upon the young life in answer to believing prayer, give it such inspirations and impulses toward all that is noble and heavenly, that it will stand at last crowned with honour and beauty. To make a home godless and prayerless is to send our children out to meet all the world's evil without either the shelter of covenant love to cover them in the storm, or the strength of holy principle in their hearts to make them able to endure.

But what is it that makes a home a Christian home? What is home religion? These questions are important enough for most thoughtful consideration. Those who wish to cultivate flowers, so as to bring out the richest possible beauty in them, study long and diligently the nature of plant-life and the many conditions of soil, of temperature, of air

and moisture essential to the growth of each particular kind of plant and the development of each variety of flower, and then with scientific exactness produce in each case the right conditions. In our homes we are growing immortal lives. The problem is to bring out in each one the very highest possible development of manly or womanly character. There are certain conditions which are essential to all true growth. If men take such pains to know how to grow flowers, which fade in a day, should we not take pains to know how to grow souls, which live for ever? — *Westminster Teacher.*

The Three-Fold Pledge.

BY CAROLINE MAY.

'If ye abide in Me;
And My words abide in you;
Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.'—*ST JOHN xv. 7.*

PART II.

'*And My words abide in you.*'

Thy words, through all my life,
Have been my peace in strife,
My only joy in lonely woe;
They have been more to me
Than sweet society,
When youth and hope were all aglow.

They are more precious far
Than old-time letters are,
That kindled in my soul such fire,
When faithful friendship seemed
Fairer than fond hope dreamed,
Dearer than warm youth could desire.

And now, when days are drear,
The Tempter drawing near,
And daring me my faith to prove—
I look within, and find,
Deep in my heart and mind,
Thy words, that never shall remove.

No! there they shall *abide*,
Like the warm vital tide
That pulses through my every vein,
Until this heart-beat stops,
And this frail body drops,
Dead evermore to sin and pain!

Engraven there, I trace
Rich promises of grace,
Uttered long since by Thy dear voice;
Yet fresh as when at first
Their living waters burst
On hearts that could not else rejoice.

Away, then, doubt and care.
Thy words to me declare—
Lo, I am with thee to the end;
With thee in gain or loss,
With thee in every cross,
Thy Rest, thy Refuge, and thy Friend.

STRANGE USE FOR A STOOL

BEFORE the art of printing, Bibles used to be very costly, each copy had to be written out so carefully. The men who did the work were called scribes. This was the business of their lives, and they did nothing else. It took them ten long months to write one, and now they are turned out by the thousand every day! And while a written Bible cost in those days three hundred dollars or more, you can now buy a nicely printed one for a few cents, bringing it within the reach of everybody. If ever so poor, one need not be without the Word of God.

In former times, only one or two persons in an entire congregation had the whole Bible written out; and so, they would own a single book — one, a copy of the Psalms, another of Job, another Isaiah, and so on, and they were really afraid to carry them to church, for fear that the priests would take them and burn them! And so, what do you think they did? The young people used to commit them to memory, and when they met for worship, on high mountain-tops or in some desolate cave (not in comfortable churches as we have), after singing and prayer, one after another present would be called upon to repeat a chapter from memory. This is the way they used to have church in those days.

After the whole Bible came to be printed, they were stowed away in secret places. It really was as much as one's life was worth to own one in those days—and yet, God taught the people in many wonderful ways how to preserve their Bible in times of peril, when its enemies were trying to destroy it; and not only that, when those enemies were trying to stop its circulation, He made use of even that very thing to spread it more and more!

Among the people who had learned to know and love this blessed book, there was a family in France who were forbidden, as many others were, to read it, on peril of their lives. The priests had great power in those days! The father felt that he would rather go without his daily bread than his Bible, and how do you think he managed to secrete it? It must be in a place that the priests could not find out, and they were continually on the search. If he had put it in a drawer or a closet, it surely would have been found, and so he made a small wooden stool with sides around the top; then he turned it upside down and fastened the back of the Bible to the under side, so that when the stool was turned up you could open the Bible, turn over the leaves, and read in any part of it. Then he made a sliding lid to the under part, and that shut it carefully out of sight, and protected it as well. It was just a common-looking stool lying round the room, and nobody could ever suspect what there was inside of it. It must have been a strange sight indeed, to see the father every night and morning carefully turn