

Our Young People

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OUR TOPIC TALK.

March 15.—*What Christ teaches about trust.* Matt. 6: 19-34.

A prudent man exercises forethought concerning the necessities of life. He seeks to have something "laid up for a rainy day." The idle or careless man takes little thought for the future. Which one comes nearer to following the teaching of Christ?

Both may be a long way from realizing Christ's ideal. Christ teaches that men should trust, but in what? Some trust in nothing, others have their trust centered in temporal and transitory objects, while others rest their hopes on the solid rock.

An easy-going life is not the one which meets with divine approval. Yet one may ask, is not this fulfilling the command, "Take no thought for the morrow?" We may learn something from the bird. She builds her nest in the spring time, rears her little brood with tender care, chirps her merry note to make the world brighter, in brief, she lives true to the purpose for which God has created her. No amount of trust can ever relieve one from the necessity of striving to faithfully discharge the obligations God has placed upon him.

Where, then, does trust belong in Christian living? Certainly in all matters over which we have no influence. When one has done his best, then he must trust in God for the results. Strenuous efforts should have a large place in the trustful Christian life, but needless worry no place. Then there are matters of so great importance that no amount of personal effort on the part of man could ever accomplish them. Who by his own efforts alone could procure forgiveness of his sins, or a sure hope for the future? Trust in God is the only way by which these things can be attained.

On the other hand, there is a large sphere for the exercise of sincere forethought and care. Seek the important things first. Development in righteousness will not come without personal striving towards the good. We must serve one master, and that service will make us, perhaps not less anxious about the temporal affairs of this life, but increasingly interested in the spiritual welfare of ourselves and our fellows. Thus we shall lay up treasures in heaven. (Dan. 12: 3). S. J. C.

PLEDGE PAPERS.—No. IV.

"I will read the Bible every day."

The pledge enjoins upon C. E.'s the reading of the Bible. Why? Because it is a means of grace. Working in conjunction with other forces it builds up Christian character. See II Tim. 3: 16, 17. I shall indicate in next paragraph how to read the Bible; but shall anticipate the process of reasoning in it, to illustrate farther why we should read the Bible, by the three terms, *reading, studying and meditation.* Reading the Bible, as implied in the pledge, properly involves these three things. By the first two, the mind masters the lesson, and the third makes it possible for us to apply the truth, thus known, to life and conditions. A homely illustration of this process is that of eating, digestion and assimilation, by which our bodies have life sustained in them. Note.—In itself reading the Bible does not give spiritual life no more than does the food we eat give physical life. In both cases life is only sustained. The Holy Spirit recreates life in the soul, and the Word of God becomes food for the spiritual nature. Read I Peter 2: 2 and I Cor. 3: 2. The best spiritual development in a world of moral and spiritual unhealthfulness, the best moral and spiritual progress in a world of side tracts and "way-sides," is attained by knowledge which the Bible provides. Read Prov. 4: 20-22 and Ps. 119: 105. The Spirit of God works through this divinely appointed means, to the Christian's good. This in part answers: "Why read the Bible?"

How?

The next question that likely suggests itself is: How shall I "read" the Bible? Let me answer, *Read it, study it, and meditate upon it.* Let us understand "read" now in a less comprehensive sense than is intended in the pledge. The mere reading of scripture at any one time should include enough verses to enable one to see all the bearings of a central truth or topic. It is like taking a bird's eye view of a landscape that precedes an inspection of individual points of interest, and final thorough knowledge. For instance, a minister will nearly always fail to see all there is in a text, if he fails to read sufficient context. If you have a text or topic taken from any one verse in the first eighteen verses of the first chapter of John, you will need to read the eighteen verses. The whole of the second chapter of the Acts should be read to understand the nature and effects of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It may be necessary to read the whole book of Esther or Ruth to be able to thoroughly understand any lesson these books teach.

After having read a section of a chapter, a chapter or a book, as it may be necessary, and the more the better, the next step is to *study*. Is it a subject, or topic, or text? What do you want to know? Inspect the individual points in the field of truth. Think slowly. Study carefully. If you cannot climb the steep places, look around for a rope. You will find one dangling from a commentary or a Bible dictionary, or the concordance in your Bible, or in the subject index, or in the marginal references, or in the INTELLIGENCER, or some good book. Study by finding out whether the passage or passages you are most anxious to know about are historical, prophetic, poetical, biographical or doctrinal. Find out whether the scripture is to be understood literally, or figuratively. Read latest translations. Analyze the sentences in the

text, and make a study of the important words. As an instance, the words *lost and saved.* The root meanings of these words are very suggestive and instructive. Get the point of view of the writers; know their lives and why and when they wrote. For instance: When did John write his gospel, and to whom did he write? Again, study also the manners and customs which obtained at the time when the authors wrote. Paraphrase some passages, *i. e.*, write the text in your own language, interpreting obscure, and expressing the implied thought. Study the geography and natural history of the Bible. These suggestions may not only be helpful in enabling one to read intelligently, and therefore profitably, but may also suggest how one may prepare the *topic-talk* as leader of a C. E. meeting. To study is to understand. It is wrong, therefore, not to study the Bible, inasmuch as we fail to understand God's will and ways and works. We wrong him just as we wrong a parent whose letter lies upon the table unopened or indifferently read. "Understandest thou what thou readest" is the question that should ever prompt us to earnestly "search the scriptures."

The word "read" in the pledge, without doubt, is intended to comprehend another attitude of the mind toward the Bible. In the language of Paul, that attitude is this: "Think on these things." In a word, *meditation*, analogous to that physical process in which the nourishing elements of food are directly taken into the blood, makes it possible for the Christian to incorporate the word of truth in the spiritual nature. The word *meditate* comes from a Hebrew word meaning "to murmur," or "to mutter," hence speaking to one's self or musing. David speaks of a happy man as one who "in his (God's) law doth meditate day and night." Ps. 1: 2. Again, in Jos. 1: 8, the Hebrew is told of the book of the law: "Thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then shalt thou make thy way prosperous, and then shalt thou have good success." Meditation serves also the good end of fixing in mind text-gems, giving to thought a spiritual force and lustre.

Does the pledge include the promise to "read" the Bible every day? Does modern civilization leave us hardly time to dust it? Then our civilization is wrong and not the pledge. E. S. P.

NOTE.—The third element in the second section of the pledge will be given in another paper.

SOMETHING FOR THE SECRETARY.

Some secretaries follow the rule given to most reporters of daily papers: Express no opinion." The result is colorless and ineffective reports. While a secretary's report should rarely find fault, and then only in an impersonal way, it should often praise, and may even mention names. Such praise seems authoritative, and is a great stimulus to the society.

Never write your minutes during the business meeting. Take full notes, and afterwards write them up with all the literary skill you possess.

Write them up immediately after the meeting, or you will forget what the notes mean. Procrastination is the thief of many things besides time.

Let the secretary use every opportunity to write letters to the other members on society affairs, and let him make



Health is a magnet which irresistibly draws the man to the woman in life's mating time. Health does more than tint the skin with beauty; it puts music into the voice and buoyancy into the steps, as well as happiness into the heart. A great many women covet beauty and are constantly seeking aids to beauty them. Let a woman first seek perfect health and all other charms shall be added to her.

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