

THE LORD'S MONEY.

BY JULIA D. PECK.

"Have you heard of the excursion down the Hudson, Christine? The Clavtons are going. Dr. Curtis and his sister, Wilbur and I, and ever so many other people whom we know. We intend to have a royal good time, and we have set our hearts upon having you go with us. So please don't disappoint us with one of your unalterable negatives."

"I should enjoy it very much, I am sure, for it is one of the trips I have always wanted to take," said Christine, when her vivacious cousin stopped for want of breath. "And it is evident you do not intend to give me an opportunity to refuse, but I have already settled the question, my dear. I saw Josie Farnum this morning, and she told me all about it."

"And you have made up your mind not to go, I see it in your face. Now, Christine, I think it really is selfish of you to spoil our pleasure that way, you are always the life of the company, and I am sure you cannot have any reasonable excuse."

"I have a very good excuse, Marion. I haven't a dollar to spare," Christine answered brightly, as if she had no reason to conceal the truth.

"Now, Christine, you are the strangest girl! I saw you put half a dollar in the plate last Sunday for home missions, and you put down two dollars for that new church in Utah. I saw the paper, though I didn't have anything to give—there are so many calls you know, but I've noticed you always give to every charity, and I'm sure I don't know how you manage."

"It is the Lord's money I have the privilege of giving, Marion," Christine answered. "Sometimes my purse hasn't a cent in it, but the Lord's treasury is never quite empty."

"What do you mean?" asked Marion, regarding her cousin curiously. "I do think you ought to use a part of your hard-earned money for your own pleasure. I am sure it is little enough enjoyment we poor teachers have, shut up in a dismal prison of a school-house forty weeks in a year. I pity myself every time I think of it! Now it is vacation, why cannot you give yourself a holiday? This excursion will not cost five dollars."

"But I have not the five dollars to spare, my dear cousin, and you must not tempt me. Besides, if you have ever tried it, you must know that the pleasure of giving is greater than almost any other. I should like to go with you, and I would do so if I saw my way clear to go, but don't think I deny myself of all pleasure. You surely cannot find a happier or more contented girl than I!"

And Marion, looking into the bright animated face of her cousin, could not doubt it. But she could not understand it; Christine was a puzzle which she could not solve.

"Do you really give a certain part of your income to the Lord?" she asked at length. "I have heard of such fanatics, but I did not suppose you were one of them, strange as I know you to be upon some points."

"No, Marion, I give very, very little of my own; somehow my money slips away; besides I mean to lay up a little every year, for I may not always have so good a situation as I now have. But I do set apart one-tenth of all the money I earn for the Lord, because I feel that it is his, and I have no more right to spend it for myself than I should have to spend the money that a friend had entrusted to my keeping."

"Your salary is the same as mine—three hundred dollars a year. Do you mean to say that thirty dollars of that sum goes for benevolence?" asked Marion incredulously.

"Yes, dear," answered Christine gently. "It is only ten cents out of every dollar, while I have ninety left for myself. It is very little."

"And you will not even allow yourself the satisfaction of calling it giving. Christine, you are the most unaccountable girl! I do not believe there is anything in the Bible to prove that the Lord demands or expects Christians to give one-tenth. Where is your authority for it?"

"I believe it is there," answered Christine

smiling, "but I want to have you look it up and tell me what you think about it. I have studied the subject earnestly and prayerfully, and I do not see how I, as a Christian, can conscientiously withhold from the Lord what it so plainly shows to me is His. And Marion, the spending of the rest of my salary gives me but a minimum of the pleasure that I derive from my 'tenth money.'"

Marion Foster was silent for several minutes, and her face wore a thoughtful look.

"I joined the church when you did, Christine," she said at length, "but I never felt as you do about these things. They perplex me sometimes until I don't know right from wrong. I suppose in one sense everything we have belongs to God, but few Christians seem to remember it. I am with the majority, but there is not much comfort in that if you are right and I am wrong."

Why you never wear jewellery or spend your money for a thousand things that seem almost indispensable to me, because others have them. And yet you are always well dressed, and look every inch a lady."

"Now don't flatter, my dear Marion," said Christine laughing. "I never had any taste for cheap finery, so I am not tempted in that direction."

"Perhaps not," answered Marion. "And very few are blessed with your exquisite taste. But Christine, I grow more and more puzzled. How do you know how to decide every question?"

Christine took up reverently a well worn Bible from the table beside her. "I find plain directions here," she said, "and I do not see why any one need be long in doubt—everything is made so clear for us."

"O Christine!" said Marion with a quiver in her voice, "that is the reason why you have grown so far above me. You have taken the Bible for your guide, and when

ANECDOTES OF SWALLOWS.

The Rev. Gilbert White, of Selborne, records the choosing of two odd situations for swallows' nests—one of them on the handles of a pair of shears which were placed against the wall of an out house. Mr. Jesse, too, in his "Gleanings in Natural History," mentions one which he saw built on the knocker of the hall-door of the rectory-house of the Rev. Egerton Bagot, at Pipe Hapes, Warwickshire. He further observes:—"The confidence which these birds place in the human race is not a little extraordinary. They not only put themselves,

but their offspring, in the power of man. I have seen their nests in situations where they were in reach of one's hand, and where they might have been destroyed in an instant. I have observed them under a doorway; the eaves of a low cottage; against the wall of a tool-shed; on the knocker of a door, and the rafter of a much frequented hay-loft."

Bishop Stanley mentions one which was built in a bracket for holding a lamp in a corner of an open passage, close to the kitchen-door, in a nobleman's house in Scotland; and though the lamp was taken down to be trimmed every day and lighted every evening, there a swallow—and it is believed the same swallow—built her nest for three or four years, quite regardless of the removal or light of the lamp, and the constant passing and repassing of the servants. His lordship adds that on the opposite side of the same open court the great house-bell was hung, under a wooden cover fastened to the north wall of the house. It was a large bell, and was rung several times a day to call the servants to their meals. Under the wooden cover of this bell the same swallow, it is believed, which had formerly built on the bracket of the lamp, built a nest for several years, and never seemed in the least disturbed by the ringing of the bell or the rattling of the rope. A figure is given of the nest, in the form of a cornucopia—both ends affixed to the roof of the cover.—From Morris's "History of British Birds."

TO FORBEAR is to refrain from doing or saying something which impulse had prompted us to do or say; it is the conquest of wiser second thought over first desires; it is the curbing of anger or indignation, the stern self-discipline that represses the hasty judgment, the unkind criticism, the uncharitable interpretation, the cutting reply.



SWALLOWS AND NEST.

"When I gave myself to Christ I gave up my own will and asked him to lead me," said Christine: "and I consult him about everything, even about the trivial, commonplace things of every-day life."

"I should never dare to do it!" exclaimed her cousin. "It seems irreverent to me. Do you really think God wishes to be troubled with such trifling things as vex us daily?"

"The very hairs of our heads are all numbered," and not one little sparrow falls to the ground without our Father's notice. Can you doubt that he is mindful of the smallest things that concern his children when the little flower by the roadside shows such infinite thought and care? So perfect is it in its construction, so complete in its perfection, and yet so small that only the microscope reveals its wonders."

"O Christine, if you are right—and I half believe you are—what a weight of responsibility is laid upon us! If you go to God with everything, that must be the reason

any question has come up for me to settle, I have dropped it, if it required any sacrifice on my part. But I have learned a lesson this morning which I shall not soon forget. Now I must hurry home, I had no idea it was so late. I wish you were going with us but if you are fully persuaded in your own mind, I dare not urge you."

"I hope you will all have a delightful time," answered Christine, "and perhaps when you have another holiday I may enjoy it with you."

Marion Foster went slowly homeward after her morning call, and her face wore an unusually thoughtful look. Will the seed sown by the wayside bring forth a good harvest?—*Zion's Herald.*

REV. EDWARD EVERETT HALE suggests that there should be a law compelling liquor dealers to wear a uniform, as licensed hack-drivers have to wear a badge.

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