

Study and Spiritual Life.

How shall study be so prosecuted as not to hurt the life of the soul, but, on the contrary, to minister to its growth and completeness? A question, this, of much importance not only to students of theology but to all students; for all who engage in study, whatever may be their career, are under obligation to cultivate the spiritual life, which is the true life, and to glorify God. Nay, the question is one of great interest to all classes of persons, inasmuch as the character both of those who address us from the pulpit, and of those who occupy the other positions which students will fill, must tell powerfully upon the moral and spiritual welfare of the whole community. To have the highest style of Christian character represented in our ministers, physicians, lawyers, teachers, statesmen, and all others who have had the benefit of a superior education would do very much to lift up the entire people. That every human being is bound to serve God and live a holy life is a very primary truth, but one of unspeakable importance; and nothing, surely, could augur worse for the learned professions, or for general society, than the prevalence of the feeling that the character and life which are very requisite in the case of religious teachers are hardly to be expected in any marked degree among those in secular callings. Piety is in much danger of disappearing from the pulpit when men come to think that this is almost the only place where it should be required.

To the question we have put, viz: How shall we so conduct study as not to hinder but rather to help religious life? some would reply that study is *necessarily* injurious to spiritual well-being, and that we cannot prevent this result; while others, possibly, would say that study is attended with no moral risk, but must certainly develop and strengthen both intellectual and spiritual life. Both answers are wrong, as abundant instances testify: some have killed the soul through study, others have constantly nourished it.

The proper work of a student is study. To acquire large and accurate knowledge of the subjects of his course is a student's contention and aim. Whatever the special field of study may be—language, philosophy, science—the true student wishes to make the largest acquirements possible, and to comprehend as completely as may be all that lies within his province. The real student is not amusing himself with a little intellectual excitation, nor seeking merely to pass examinations and get his standing; he is striving to master his subjects, as far as ability and opportunity admit.