

hardly know what is best to do. Much honest concern is often given the young

Our Safe Example Christian who wants in all things to be consistent and to act as a loyal follower of Jesus Christ should, in such matters, what shall be the controlling law to guide and direct us,—the example of our certainly friends or that of our Lord? Certainly the latter. Our associates may or may not know all about us; He always does. They may be no more trustworthy as guides to us than we are to them, and we know our own incompetency to safely lead our friends; but He has been with all the way of human life, and is able to fully direct His followers. We may ask Him and find adequate instructions.—True, He made no detailed inventory of daily duties, nor did He set before His disciples any long catalogue of proscribed personal habits which here and there, nor would He do so were He now visibly among us. But He did announce as His great controlling principle of conduct and as the constant practice of His life, "I do always those things that please Him." On all questions, therefore, that admit of differences of opinion among honest Christian men and women, our only safe plan is to study them from the viewpoint of personal loyalty to our Heavenly Father as exemplified by Jesus Christ our Lord, and to act accordingly. Never, then, will such questions arise as now too often bring perplexity to our minds and lead to inconsistency in our conduct. "Will it do me any harm?" is not the only nor is it the chief question. "Will it honor God?" "Will it exalt Christ?" "Will it please my Father?" "Will it help some other one?" "Will it brighten or dull my own religious experience?"—these are the kind of questions that should be honestly faced and prayerfully decided.

In these matters, no one person among all the circle of our earthly counsellors is wise enough to render infallible judgment or to afford aolute guidance to us. We must seek direction elsewhere. These questions must be faced alone with God and be decided as He alone can give light and wisdom to His enquiring child. Were we to pray more and question one another less, on all such debatable points, we would doubtless make fewer errors and go less frequently astray. But it is often more congenial to our desires to talk to an earthly friend than to the Friend who knows us through and through, about these things. This may explain our frequent perplexity. Only in more prayer and a more intimate daily communion with God, is our safety and strength, for through these channels alone can a safe light and a satisfactory explanation of duty come. It is sound advice, therefore, and our young people may safely follow it, to say: Cultivate the habit of private enquiry each morning, of your Heavenly Father, as to all that affects your relations to Him or influences your conduct among your fellows; trust His Spirit's guidance be true to you; let your humble discipline; loyally serve Him as you have opportunity with your associates; and in such communion with Him and fidelity to His leadership and example you will find it increasingly easy and a source of abounding joy as the New Year grows old, to say: "Trusting in the help of the Holy Spirit, I promise that I will follow the example of my Saviour and Lord, and make an honest effort daily in all things to do the will of God my Heavenly Father."

Beginnings and Endings

WE have all read the old proverb, "Begun is half done." I suppose the ancients merely meant by it that the execution of any task was important enough to warrant careful attention to the beginning of it. And they were correct. Another has said, "People must begin before they attempt to finish or improve." Yet it is this very act of beginning that most troubles many of us, and no truer statement was ever penned than that which millions have verified.—"Procrastination is the thief of time." The habit of putting off until some other day what should engage our thought and activities to-day, has robbed thousands of part of life's richest treasures, and has left their paupers forever.

The untiring march of Father Time in his progress through the centuries, once again forces upon us more or less consideration of this problem of begin-

EACH temptation met separately, each religious duty taken up when it comes and attended to then and there, no struggle passed through in advance, but the battles fought when they force themselves upon us. **ONE DAY AT A TIME** and each emergency or endeavor in its order! Adopt that rule, resolving soul, and your resolutions will be as strong on the thirty-first day of December as they are on the first of January. **May, far more so: for to-day they are mere hopes, promises, expectations; then they will be achievements.—From "Vision and Service."**

nings. Already the calendar is changed, and whether we are willing or not, we stand face to face with a new year. Many have resolved to begin it aright. This is wise and commendable, and given a purpose strong enough and continuance in well doing sufficiently prolonged, there is no reason why our hopes as we face at the dawning of the year may not become realities during its progress. There is some solid truth, however, in the statement of the great German philosopher, "All beginnings are easy, it is the ulterior steps that are of most difficult ascent and most rarely taken." But even so, we should not lose heart, for if we count every day as a new opportunity, we may begin each of the 366 days of 1912 as we began the first day, and accomplish 366 times over what we did on January the first.

At the longest, and to the best as to the worst of men, life passes one day at a time. Not what I may achieve this year, but what I shall accomplish to-day, is of great moment, and calls for utmost vigilance and care. No one-day of our brief mortal life is not a year so much as a day, and not so truly every day as a minute. It is the misuse or careless neglect of the little moments that constitutes the chief loss in life. "Time wasted is existence; time used, is life." It is verily true and none are to be more pitted than those persons whose chief employment seems to be to put in the time. Thomson may well write:

"Their only labor was to kill the time,
And labor dire it is, and weary too,
It is inexpressibly sad to see how, in thoughtless dawdling through the days, so many seem to forget utterly the impressive fact that "Time is the wheel-

track in which we roll on toward eternity." I never realized this so deeply as when standing one day at the very entrance to San Francisco's underworld and pondering some of the problems involved in the immoral life about Chinatown. I happened to look up, and there, high above the domes of St. Mary's Church, and close to the dial of the clock, were the words of wise admonition, "Son, observe the time and flee from evil." And yet, despite that silent warning, hundreds of careless and self-indulgent youth have passed on from the very shadow of the sanctuary to her house, in which reside disgrace, misery, shame and death. And I remembered the couplet whose truth I wished many such might appreciate.—

"Timely advised, the coming evil shun;
Better not do the deed than weep it done."

Beginnings in evil are as much to be avoided as beginnings in good are to be welcomed, for as surely as the practice of good ensures goodness does the practice of evil develop villainy. In either case like produces like. An old Spanish proverb well says, "Live with wolves and you will soon learn to howl." No young person, therefore, can act prematurely in making early choice, or unwisely, in definitely and resolutely repeating it each succeeding day until nothing finds lodgement in the mind but pure thought and holy desires. One day at a time shall thus pass, and by its passing make addition to his wealth of godly character, and enlarge his priceless store of eternal riches laid up in the heavenly world. Youth is more inclined to think of beginnings than disposed to ponder endings; but endings surely come as well or woe, and he only is wise who makes provision by a right use of to-day for the last day, towards which all other days tend. Young well counsel:—

"Thou think'et it folly to be wise too soon.
Youth is not rich in time, it may be poor,
Part with it as with money, sparing,
Day
No moment but in purchase of its worth;
And what it's worth—ask death-beds,
they can tell."

But, thank God, the testimony of thousands who have lived for Him, when they have faced the irrevocable past in the light of a dawning eternity, has been so clear and bright that many other tired and wearied pilgrims have been encouraged to press on all undaunted and unafraid, until God's good angel shall welcome them also into the effulgent glory of the Celestial Country. Truly—

"No smile is like the smile of death,
When, all good musings past,
Rice wafted with the parting breath
The sweetest thought the last."

But for such an ending we must carefully choose a right beginning.

I am confident that the great majority of my readers will be seeking a right beginning. Knowing the weakness of youth as only one can who has vivid recollections of his own early struggles, my one great fear is that some of you may become discouraged, and cease your daily resolutions and strivings after the highest and best things of God. I have greatly beloved years ago by a striking yet brief motto someone gave me. It was of only four words, but they came to mean much, and I pass them on to