

Pastor and People.

"HE GOETH BEFORE."

When some strange and unknown pathway
Stretches out beneath our feet,
When we willingly would linger
In the spot that seems so sweet,
When outside the sheltered pastures
We can hear the lions' roar,
Fear them not—they cannot harm thee;
Jesus goeth on before.

When we seek a closer knowledge
Of our heavenly Father's love,
Willing all to leave if only
We may more His fulness prove;
When the heights seem sadly steeper
Than our mortal wings can soar,
Eagles' wings shall bear thee upward;
Jesus goeth on before.

When the days of life are ending,
And we hear the Father's call,
When we sadly see so little
Done for Him who gave us all,
Fear thou not the darksome valley;
Press to heaven's door:
Not thyself shall win the entrance—
Jesus goeth on before.

—American Messenger.

SUNDAY BICYCLES.

"Dear Dr. Clark:—Will you kindly give in your talks with young men your opinion as to bicycle-riding on Sunday? If it is not wrong, I would very much like to take a ride on my wheel Sunday afternoon or early Sunday morning before church. I feel that it would not hurt my spiritual life at all, but rather would make me feel in better condition to listen to a sermon, or do anything else in that line the rest of the day. I know some people think it is wrong; still, these same people go for long walks, and think that all right, and I see no more harm in one than the other."

Your question is one of genuine moment, my dear friend, and one that cannot be dismissed with a single word of authority. Many a young person has wished, I know, that there was some prophet or pope to decide these questions for him. But, thank God, Protestantism has no pope, and our manhood or womanhood is developed as it could be in no other way by facing just such questions for ourselves, recognizing our accountability and responsibility, and deciding what is right for us as individuals before God.

There are two things to be considered in deciding this question. One is the effect of Sunday bicycling on yourself. You say that it will do you no harm, but rather good. Perhaps you are right. But of that I am not quite sure. Are you certain that it will not lower your reverence for the Sabbath and your general moral standard more than a quiet walk for fresh air and exercise?

But, after all, this question, and many others like it resolves itself into Cain's old question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself, and no man rideth his bicycle to himself. We are involved in so complex a network of relationships one with another that others must be considered in deciding any such question.

You are not a Robinson Crusoe, with your man Friday and your goat and parrot on a desert island.

Will your bicycle lead somebody else to break the Sabbath? Will your spin before church keep somebody away from church who otherwise would go? Shall you be counted among Sabbath-breakers, and your profession of religion be discounted, if you take a ride just for exercise Sunday morning? Will your example do something to break down the sanctity of the American Sabbath? All these questions must be settled before you join the ranks of Sunday bicyclers.

Does this seem a narrow, cramped sort of life—always looking out for somebody else, always living in fear of public opinion? Ah, there is one motive that raises any such self-denial above the fear of public opinion, above mere expediency. It is the same motive that has sent martyrs to the stake and missionaries to the cannibals, and is to-day nerving our fellow Christians in Armenia by the thousand to give up their lives.

"The love of Christ constraineth us." Therefore, we will not ride if it will bring dishonor upon His name, or will cause others to desecrate His day.—Golden Rule.

WHY A CHURCH MEMBER SHOULD TAKE A CHURCH PAPER.

Because of his promise when he became a member to support the benevolent and general interests of his church.

Every member and his family should spend as much, at least, for religious papers as for others.

Efficient members of political parties take their party papers, and endeavor to extend their circulation. Can a church member do less for his church paper?

Is it possible that one can develop in himself and in his children a taste and a love for the pure and the noble by taking into his home the secular newspapers only, many columns of which are full of gossip and scandal, and sensational details of crime too foul to print?

How can the evil influences of these secular newspapers be counteracted except by bringing into the family the religious paper?

Why is it that "man cannot live by bread alone"? If the soul is more than the body, the wise man will supply religious food for his soul.

Every Christian parent owes it to his church, to his family, to every friend that visits him, even to the stranger that enters his door and has a minute to read, to the youth of his neighborhood, to his pastor, and to his God, to take a good religious paper, and the debt increases every year he neglects this plain duty.

Church members can be of but little value to a church if they are ignorant of the principles, polity and needs of that church. Fidelity and efficient work must follow a knowledge of the church's needs. If one would be free from error and superstition, he must know the truth, and the truth shall make him free. The church paper enlightens and helps to make free, and there is no substitute for it.—Methodist Recorder.

THE DAILY TEST.

One of the things which gives life its interest and its dignity is the fact that no experience stands by itself, but becomes a preparation for that which is to follow. There is a unity and completeness about life on the moral and intellectual sides which gives every act a definite force, and which lends even to trivial things that importance which comes from close and vital relation to the working out of a large and comprehensive scheme. It is a truism that all life is but a preparation, but it is one of those truisms which very few people appear to believe, or, if they believe, to act upon. A great many men and women live as if each day had no bearing upon its successor, and as if each act were unrelated to the acts that are to follow it. They have read neither history nor their own lives. They have failed to learn the first and most obvious lesson of experience. In every successful career there is clearly revealed the close relation between the culmination in some striking achievement, and the fidelity, patience, and courage which went before it. No man comes suddenly into any kind of supremacy. Every kind of superiority is the result of a thousand apparently unimportant and insignificant acts. The preparation for a great crisis is rarely made consciously. It is generally made by the man or woman who is doing the work of the day with the utmost fidelity, without any idea that that fidelity is to find its reward in the possibility of a notable achievement at the end. The experience of life is so adjusted to the development of character that everything which comes in the shape of opportunity or duty presents a test which there is no possibility of evading. He who meets these tests

quietly from day to day, often without the consciousness that they are tests, is making sure preparation for the time when some great test will suddenly be applied, and the quality of the intellectual and moral fibre instantly disclosed. However skeptical men may affect to be, there is no getting away from God in this life. Every day, in every occupation, we are dealing with an invisible power, and the character of our dealing, whether we will or no, is determining the kind of success or the degree of failure that shall come to us. The oft quoted remark credited to Wellington, that Waterloo was won on the cricket-field at Eton, is only a dramatic way of putting the truth that the great victories are not won on the field where they are finally secured, but in a hundred unregarded preliminary trials of strength. Every day is such a trial.—The Outlook.

THE MINISTER'S WIFE.

On the subject of the "minister's wife" much has been written and spoken, says the *Mid-Continent*. There is too often a lack of common sense in the treatment of this subject. The simple fact seems to be overlooked in some congregations that when a minister marries a woman he does so as a man and not as an official. This is his private affair with which an outsider has no business to intermeddle. A number of years ago a prominent clergyman of our church who was on the eve of marrying his second wife, was waited upon by his elders and informed of their objections to the choice he had made. He heard what they had to say, and then virtually told them to mind their own business. He married the woman of his choice and she made him a most excellent wife. We admire the "spunk" this gentleman showed. The individual known as "the minister's wife" has her place and sphere. So far as church work is concerned no more responsibility rightfully belongs to her than to the wife of an elder or private member. The notion that she must be "a woman of all work" in the church and community is both cruel and preposterous. The wife of more than one minister would be in good health to-day were it not for yielding to a demand of this character. The late Dr. Bethune smote this nonsensical notion in a vital part when the qualifications of his wife for supposed official duty were being looked into, he asked the brethren, "Do you intend to pay her a salary?" A large amount of unnecessary, and often very irksome labor is imposed upon the wife of a minister in the way of calling. There is neither propriety nor necessity in her doing any more in this line of work than any other lady member of the church. Her divinely ordained sphere is in her home. There she belongs, and it is there that she finds obligations and duties which have a paramount claim upon her attention and time.

INDIVIDUAL EFFORT.

When John Williams, the martyr missionary of Erromanga, went to the South Sea Islands, he took with him a single banana-tree from an English nobleman's conservatory. And now, from that single banana-tree, bananas are to be found throughout the whole group of islands. Before the negro slaves in the West Indies were emancipated, a regiment of British soldiers were stationed near one of the plantations. A soldier offered to teach a slave to read, on condition that he would teach a second, and that second a third, and so on. This he faithfully carried out, though severely flogged by the master of the plantation. Being sent to another plantation, he repeated the same thing there, and when at length liberty was proclaimed throughout the island, and the Bible Society offered a New Testament to every negro who could read, the number taught through this slave's instrumentality was no less than six hundred.

BE ALWAYS READY.

The criticalness of life should lead us to be always ready for death. Though we are plainly taught by our Lord not to be anxious about anything that the future may have in store for us, we are as plainly taught to live so as to be prepared for any event which may occur. Indeed, the only way to eliminate care from our present is to be ready for any possible future. Death is not merely a possibility, but is an inevitable event in every one's future; we can live untroubled by dread of it only by being ever ready for it. Preparation for death is made by living a true Christian life. If we are in Christ by faith, and then follow Christ, doing His will day by day, we are prepared for death, and it can never surprise us unready.

"It matters little what hour o' the day
The righteous fall asleep; death cannot come
To him untimely who is fit to die.
The less of the cold earth, the more of heaven;
The briefer life, the longer immortality."

True preparation for death is made when we close each day as if it were the last. We are never sure of to-morrow, we should leave nothing incomplete any night. Each single separate little day should be a miniature life complete in itself, with nothing of duty left over. God gives us life by days, and with each day He gives His own allotment of duty, a portion of His plan to be wrought out, a fragment of His purpose to be accomplished by us. Says F. W. Faber, "Every hour comes with some little faggot of God's will fastened upon its back." Our mission is to find that bit of divine will and do it. Well-lived days make completed years, and the years well-lived as they come make a life beautiful and full. In such a life no special preparation of any kind is needed; he who lives thus is always ready. Each day prepares for the next, and the last day prepares for glory.—Dr. Miller.

AN UNNATURAL TONE IN PREACHING.

Not long ago the criticism was made on a certain young minister that notwithstanding his good points, he was a very disagreeable speaker because of the habit of preaching in an unnatural and unnecessarily loud tone of voice. How strange it is that so many people when speaking on the subject of religion assume a peculiarly solemn and unnatural tone! When they pray, or read the Bible, or speak in the testimony meetings, and as it is with some preachers in the pulpit, they assume a tone so unnatural as to be positively repulsive to thoughtful people.

It was stated in regard to the minister above referred to that in preaching a funeral sermon his voice was natural and reasonably modulated, whereupon some one suggested that he should only preach on funeral occasions.

A recent writer in the *Sunday School Times* relates the following incident, which is said to have had a good effect:

"A preacher in one of our cities has been in the habit of damaging excellent sermons, Sunday after Sunday, by yelling at his audience, to their discomfort and vexation. He got married the other day, and the first thing this wise woman of Tekoa did was to take his manuscript, and insert at short intervals, in red ink, 'Don't holler so loud!' The congregation were highly amused when they heard of this scheme for their benefit, but I understand it works well."

There are many preachers who would be much more effective in their pulpit work, and much more highly appreciated, if they did not "holler" so much. Who will tell them about it?—Telescope.

Dean Farrar's new book, "The Bible: What It Is and What It Is Not," is now going through the press. The work has been a long time in the writing, and is expected to prove an interesting contribution to the discussion of the Scriptures. It will appear simultaneously in America.