

## The Christian Life.

### WHILE THE YEAR DIES.

BY GEORGE SPRAGUE FULCHER.

I may fold my hands, and close my eyes,  
And lay my work away,  
I have tried to be true to the task assign-  
ed,

To listen and obey.  
I have smiled when the clouds were  
thickest,

I have loved when the world was  
cold;  
Have hoped till the lead of my sinful  
self

Was changed to the Master's gold.  
And a year is done,  
Have I lost? Have I won?  
I shall know in the judgment day.

It's a hard enough fight, this life of  
ours,

Uphill most of the way.  
I have tried to look at the cheerful side,  
And sing as well as pray.

He hasn't given me many tasks,  
Nor burdens of place nor power,  
Still I've tried to be faithful in all He  
asks,

And honest with every hour.  
And the night is come,  
Is His "well done" won?  
I shall know in the judgment day.

### THE OLD YEAR.

The gift of an added year of earthly life, when granted by the Creator to any man, is a boon for which devout thanks should be offered. It is a great experience to spend a twelvemonth in this big, busy world. Whatever else life may or may not be, it is not devoid of incident nor, as a rule, tiresome and common-place. The most obscure lives have in them commonly in this age a large number of experiences that may properly be called "events"—happenings tragic, comic, disturbing, inspiring, but in no sense trivial or despicable.

Corresponding to God's gift of added life is life's great responsibility. That must indeed be a peculiarly hard nature that can remain insensitive to the pathetic and solemn suggestions with which the flight of the old year is attended. While it is true that human calendars are constructed on somewhat forced and artificial principles, while we may, looking at it in one way, say that an old year dies and a new year begins every day, yet by general custom, we have come to associate the death as we term it of the old year with the season of falling snow-flakes or driving sleet. Thus nature by its wintry processes seem to impress the moral lessons of the passing year the more deeply on susceptible hearts.

It may be that the years seem to pass more quickly as one grows older. Certainly existence appears increasingly engrossing and exacting year by year from the time of reaching adulthood up to the margin of that period of reflective reticacy which someone has happily called the leisure season at the close of life. In the life of the average busy man of the present day, there appear to be few breathless spells, when brain and body may recover elasticity. Little opportunity is left for meditation and the quiet culture of the soul. The idea of duty has commandeered the province of the devotional. The practical has pre-empted the powers of life, wresting them away from the spiritual use. The

heart secures little attention. If the Sabbath were properly observed by more an increased degree of spiritual culture could be secured intermittently during the course of the swiftly flying months. It is a regrettable fact, however, that multitudes of people rush through the twelvemonth with scarce a stop at any station for repairs to the soul, and, unless they bring up with a touch of the air-brake at the "division point" indicated on the calendar as the last day of the year, it is difficult to see when their worldly headway is ever to be checked, or when the turn is to be made in the direction of eternal life.

There are denominations of Christians who distinctly mark the closing hours of the year with watch-night services. These services, while not rendered obligatory by any New Testament utterance of canons of the church, may be rendered very profitable from a spiritual point of view if conducted in the right manner. As a matter of sentiment, it is certainly a beautiful idea to pass the last hours of the departing year in reading together the words of the Heavenly Father, and joining voices in praise and in testimony, and then to spend the very last moments of the year, before the merry New Year greetings ring out from the belfries, in silent prayer. It is a good thing to pray one's year along through the world—to pray the old away and the new into the life. But whether a watch-night service is or is not held at any particular time or place, its essential objects should in some way be secured, namely, the serious contemplation of the brevity of life and of life's true use and end, sincere contrition for all failures and lapses in the past, a hearty ascription to praise to the good God for his sustaining mercy in days that are gone, and a humble yet unwavering confidence in divine upholding for all the future. The old year anniversary time is an "Ebenezer" season, a period for the recognition of the "Thus far" mercy of the Lord, invisible monuments of blessing are raised in memorial of his grace and goodness, and when the soul expresses its reverent gratitude and faith in the heartfelt cry:

"Hither, by Thy help I've come,  
And I hope by Thy good pleasure  
Safely to arrive at home!"

### IN CHRIST.

This is the singular expression, but the apostle makes use of it. He also uses another expression which may help us to understand this one. He says: "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." By those who are in the flesh he no doubt means those who are controlled and led by the lusts of the flesh, the desires and affections of the worldly mind. One may be in the flesh without being what we call a base man. He may be moral and upright, but his desires and ambitions are all bounded by the things of the world. One who is in Christ is the opposite of this. He is governed and led by the Spirit of Christ. His desires and tastes are toward Christ.

One may live so near, to an earthly friend as to be lost and swallowed up in that friend. In his eyes his friend is the fairest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely. Even his de-

fects and deformities disappear altogether, or are transformed into real excellencies. He admires the lisp in his speech, the limp in his walk, and the scar on his face. He can truly say to his friend, "Entreat me not, I pray thee, to depart. Where thou goest, I will go; where thou lodgest, I will lodge; where thou diest, I will die; and there will I be buried. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." So fully does he love and trust his friend that their lives are bound up together. They are one and inseparable.

So does the Christian love and trust Christ. No sacrifice is too painful for him to make cheerfully, no labor is too severe for him to perform willingly, no burden is too heavy for him to bear gladly, if by so doing he may serve his Lord. He is lost and swallowed up in Christ. It is not enough to take Christ as a refuge in time of storm. He is a refuge. The psalmist sings, "The Lord is our refuge." Our poet sings:

"Jesus, Lover of my soul,  
Let me to Thy bosom fly,  
While the nearer waters roll,  
While the tempest still is high!  
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,  
Till the storm of life is past."

This is well, but if that were all Jesus would only be a convenience. He would be our servant, but not our Lord. We would be making use of him for a shelter when no other could be found. But that is not all. To the Christian Jesus is not only a refuge in time of storm, but at all times. The Christian's life is hid with Christ in God. He also sings:

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want,  
More than all in Thee I find."

Moreover, he also sings from his heart:

"Thou of life the fountain art,  
Freely let me take of Thee;  
Spring Thou up within my heart,  
Rise to all eternity."

His thoughts are centred in Christ. His affections are fixed upon Christ. His will is swallowed up in the will of Christ. Christ is all and in all. He is in Christ. His thoughts, his time, and his energies are all employed in the service of Christ. This is all his business here below. He and his Lord are one and inseparable.

### CHRISTIANITY AND WAR.

Infidels sometimes say that Christianity has been the cause of more war than anything else. Well, suppose this were true. The sun has been the cause of more weeds than anything else; is that any reason why the sun should be blotted out of existence? The rain has been the cause of more floods than anything else. Shall we therefore decide that the rain is a curse and not a blessing to the world?

But Christianity is not the cause of wars. Sheep do not go to war with wolves. It is the wolves that make war on the sheep. When Christ said, "I came not to send peace on the earth, but a sword," the meaning was, that the truth which he declared, would so awaken the opposition of evil men that it would be the innocent occasion of calamities and strifes.

Christianity is not the cause of wars. Read the Sermon on the Mount, and see if it breathes the spirit of war,

"Blessed are the peacemakers," said the Saviour; and to the only disciple who ever undertook to defend him, he said, "Put up thy sword." Wars and fightings among men come of men's lusts, which have not yet been subdued by the gospel of Christ. It is Satan, on the other side, that makes the wars; it is the spirit of demons who gather the nations to battle. "My kingdom is not of this world," said the Saviour. "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews." John xviii, 36.

No doubt there are people and nations which have stolen the Christian name, and under it prosecute wars. I remember hearing a London infidel say that the Bible was the cause of the atrocities of the Spanish Inquisition; and he seemed somewhat surprised when told that the men guilty of those atrocities would have burned him alive for reading or possessing a Bible. Surely the Bible ought not to be blamed for the misdeeds of those who hate the book and persecute those who love and read it.

The angels' message is, "Peace on earth and good will to men." Let us sound it abroad, and let us pray that the King of Righteousness and King of Peace may soon come and reign over all the earth.

*Mild in Their Action.* — Parmelee's Vegetable Pills are very mild in their action. They do not cause griping in the stomach or cause disturbances there as so many pills do. Therefore, the most delicate can take them without fear of unpleasant results. They can, too, be administered to children without imposing the penalties which follow the use of pills not so carefully prepared.

If gratitude is due from man to man, how much more from man to his Maker! The Supreme Being does not only confer upon us those bounties which proceed more immediately from his hand, but even those benefits which are conveyed to us by others. Every blessing we enjoy, by what means soever it may be derived upon us, is the gift of him who is the great author of good and father of mercies.—Joseph Addison.

There are many cough medicines in the market, that it is sometimes difficult to tell which to buy; but if we had a cough, a cold, or an affliction of the throat or lungs, we would try Bickle's Anti-Consumptive Syrup. Those who have used it think it is far ahead of all other preparations recommended for such complaints. The little folks like it as it is as pleasant as syrup.

He who does not feel that no blessings could come from heaven unless forgiveness cleared the way for them, has yet to learn the deepest music of thankfulness.—Alexander McLaren, D. D.

Loss of flesh, cough and pain in the chest may not seem consumption, but are bad signs. Allen's Lung Balsam loosens the cough and heals inflamed air passages. Not a grain of opium in it.

The weight of offering praise to God is too great for men to lift; and as for angels, it will take all their strength and the best abilities to go with it.—David Dickson.