

stand on the threshold of another year, that question is indeed of paramount importance. Have you or I, my friend, graduated with honors, have we stood the test in the trying ordeal of self-examination? What have you been doing, where is your work, of what manner is it, and how has it been done? Is it of the earth, earthly, frail and perishable, or have you been drawing wisdom from the well of salvation? How varied, and alas! how unsatisfactory must be many of the answers! Remember we are giving in our account of the year's stewardship, and the Master's eye is upon us; He sees into our hearts, and our thoughts are to Him clear as sunbeams. As He examines them, how few countenances are lighted up with satisfaction, fewer still beam with happiness, and upon scarcely one do you see that buoyant and eager enthusiasm to render an account of a well spent year.

Among the crowd there stands a young man, conspicuous for his exuberance of health and manly beauty. Every lineament of his countenance betokens vigor of mind and strength of body. What account have you to give, my friend?

I have been laying up for myself treasures on earth, I have been toiling to add heap to heap. I have made many commercial ventures, and all successfully. I have been studying price-lists, I have been deep in the mysteries of shares and foreign markets; I have taken little rest, and not much recreation. My time, my thought, my energies, have been given to mammon. I have tried to lay the foundation of a great fortune, and the superstructure is now rising—I am already almost an authority on change; my name stands high in commercial circles; men of capital and standing give me their friendship and confidence—I am invited to the houses of the rich and fashionable. Fortune has smiled and still smiles upon me, and men of the world gather round and congratulate me.

So far you have told the truth. You have girt yourself for the race; your goal is riches, and you have many imitators and many competitors. But is this all. Have you listened to the cry of the poor and needy. Have you ministered to the wants of the widow and orphan. Have you reflected that there is a God in the world, and that he has given us laws to obey and precepts to follow, and a gospel to be preached, and published and extended to the ends of the earth? What account have you to give of these things? My time, my talents, have been given to other pursuits. Yet have I done somewhat. I will tell thee, saith the great Judge, what thou hast done, for I know it all. To the tale of distress you have turned a deaf or an unwilling ear. To the cry of poverty you have given the harsh refusal or the harsher insult. The everlasting gospel you have converted into a dead ceremony or an idle profession. It is true that once on each Sabbath

day, if the weather is fine you may be seen in your soft and luxurious pew, in the house of God, hearing with decent apathy the great truths of eternity. But the preacher or his principles have been little in your thoughts, and have been but little strengthened by your means, and never by your prayers. It is true, your name is sometimes conspicuous on the subscription list for noble and immortal purposes, but the offering cannot be accepted, seeing that it has been made from motives of selfishness and vanity.

Reader! that young man's year is past and nothing is laid up—nothing for eternity. To him, the great future is a blank—though for an infinitesimal fragment of it he is willing to live the life of a slave, to shut his heart against every generous aspiration, and his ears to every immortal truth, to give a hypocritical and make belief reverence to the God who made him, while his whole affections, his entire soul are given up to the idols of this present world. Yet must he look back, if not this year, at a time not very far distant, into the gloomy record of misspent years and neglected opportunities, and shall it be better to do so now, or to wait till he cannot help it, when he feels he must, and when he feels too that it may be too late. It may be, that the allotted decades of years shall have passed over his head, each one more prosperous than the last, till he stands among the first in worldly grandeur—rich in costly furniture, in gay equipage, in lands, in ships, in wealth, large even as his large desires, but the end is at hand, and a human soul ere it parts company with the world must make up its earthly account. Must that account be left to a death-bed, when the body is racked with pain and the spirit with fear and anguish, when the worn and feeble frame is stretched upon a lordly couch which affords no relief, while the look of the skillful and fashionable physician tells but too truly that the last flicker of life will soon be out, and the faces of silent and decently sorrowing friends all indicate that the terrible hour is at hand. The man of God, too, may be there, offering up the humble prayer and whispering the gospel hope and the gospel promise, but the eye of the mind is fixed upon the past. Its record forces itself in, with an intensity proportionate to former neglect, and fills the soul with horror to which the weak and fainting spirit can give but little visible expression. What comfort can the ardent labors of long misspent years now afford? None whatever. The day of grace has been allowed to pass, and at the last hour may hardly be purchased back. Is not this then a lesson to the eager worldling to be up and doing, and to give somewhat of his services to that Master who has given him all he has?

We have chosen but one instance, one sample out of the motley crowd; we have not space to extend the selection. But if the danger is not alike to all, it differs only