

producing in us those "fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God?"* Beloved, in the view of this closing year, I would put these questions to myself as well as to all of you. May the Lord give us grace so to answer them now, as we shall wish to in the day when we must give in our account!

2. And are not the days of the years of our life evil, *when we consider how much sin there is defiling our every thought, polluting our every action and our every word?* Alas! there are too many whose lives in this respect are one unmingled evil. They are yet the bondslaves of the world; yet the slaves of their own evil hearts; yet the willing servants of the Devil; and so, of course, the enemies of God. It may be they are not flagrant sinners; it may be, even, that, measured by the world's scale, they are good enough: but they are yet unconverted, yet ignorant of Christ, yet alienated from God; and their lives in His sight are nought but evil. Mercies have appealed to them, but have not drawn them; afflictions have pressed upon them, but have not brought them to the Lord; the word of the Lord's grace has called to them, but they have refused to return. Surely, the days of an unconverted man are evil. They may not be marked by much calamity or

* Phil. i. 11.