

The Quiet Hour

A Fresh Starting Point.*

It is a common thing for people to make new resolutions on entering upon a new year. This is a good thing to do, especially when we are conscious of mispent time in the past. But in making these resolutions, we should remember that "this year also" will be just like the past, unless we consecrate it and ourselves to the Lord in holy service for God. What are we then going to make of this year upon which we have entered? It will be just what we make it. We greatly mistake, if we think that there is no opportunity for ordinary lives to do good. We can all educate our hearts by deeds of love, and to be the instruments of blessing to our brother men. There are two ways in which we may help others—by guarding them from danger, and by soothing them in their rough path by kindly sympathies. And it is an encouraging thought, that he who cannot do the one, has, at least, the other in his power. If he is unable to protect, he can sympathize. Let the weakest, let the humblest of my hearers remember, that in his daily course, he can, if he will, shed around him the atmosphere of heaven: kindly words, sympathizing attentions watchfulness against wounding men's sensitiveness—these cost very little, but they are priceless in value. Are they not, brethren, almost the staple of our daily happiness? From hour to hour, from moment to moment, we are supported, blest by small kindnesses.

"In the common relations of life there is room not only for duty but for heroism. No ministry is more pleasing to the Master than that of cheerful and hearty faithfulness to lowly duty, when there is no pen to write its history and no voice to proclaim its praise." To be a good husband, loving, tender, and unselfish and cherishing; or a good wife, thoughtful, helpful, uncomplaining and inspiring, is most acceptable service. To live well in one's place in the world, adorning one's calling, however lowly; doing one's most prosaic work diligently and honestly, and dwelling in love and unselfishness with all men, is to live grandly. One who fights well the battle with his own lusts and tempers, in the midst of the countless temptations and provocations of everyday life is a Christian hero.

*From notes by a hearer of concluding portion of New Year's sermon by Rev. John Abraham, in St. Andrew's Church, Whitby.

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths; in feelings, not in figures on a dial." "We should count time by heart-throbs." "He lives most who thinks most,—feels the noblest, and acts the best."

These are some of the things we should seek to do during the year. To some the task may seem impossible of accomplishment; but God places before us no duty that we are unable to perform; and as a stimulus to noble effort, we should bear in mind that God's angel keeps an accurate account of all we do. Stored away in the archives of eternity, these pages of life will be brought out again, when the last year of all years stands crowned in the presence of God. Oh! then, so let us live now, that we shall be satisfied with the record these pages will reveal when we are called to our final account.

And above all, let us seek that higher life found through faith in the Son of God. The shroud of the dying year covers the graves of some, who, with us welcomed its birth. There are vacant pews in our churches; empty chairs at the firesides that were not vacant when the year began. Many who were in health and happiness at the opening of the year are now in the far-off world of spirits. Who shall say that ere another year shall close, we, too, may not be numbered with the silent dead? How important, then, that we should be prepared to go when God calls us away.

"When thou my righteous judge shall come,
To take thy ransomed people home,
Shall I, among them stand?
Shall such a worthless worm as I,
Who sometimes am afraid to die,
Be found at thy right hand?"

Such thoughts should induce us to leave sin and worldliness, and live for the grand life beyond. The sun grows large as it goes down, so ought the Christian's character to round and brighten. How quietly the sun sets, elsewhere to rise and shine—so should the Christian's departure be.

Like flakes of snow that fall unperceived upon the earth, the seemingly unimportant events of life succeed one another. No single flake that is added to the pile produces a sensible change; no single action creates, however it may exhibit, a man's character. — Jeremy Taylor.

Those who are trying to bring men home to God must be on their way to God's home themselves.—R. W. Dale, D.D.

God's Goodness.

The goodness of God is infinite, and extends to all men. He sendeth his rain upon the just and unjust. He preserves in life the good and bad alike, "for in Him we live and move and have our being," and he sent His Son to exhibit that love for the world. Hence it is written: "God so loved the world" that He sent His Son to die, "that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." Aye, God's goodness extends to even the animal creation. He has made "the high hills as a refuge for the wild goats, and the rocks for the conies." "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle." "He sendeth the springs into the valleys which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field; the wild asses quench their thirst." Well might the Psalmist sing: "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord."—Christian Instructor.

"The Lord Will Provide."

"Write deep in your hearts this New Year's Day the word of sublime confidence; Jehovah-jireh. It tells you that you can trust God always; that no promise of His ever fails; that He doeth all things well; that out of all seeming loss and destruction of human hopes He brings blessing. You have not passed this way heretofore. There will be sorrows and joys, failures and successes this year, just as there were last year. You cannot forecast individual experiences. You cannot set a step before your feet. Yet Jehovah-jireh calls you to enter the new year with calm trust. It bids you put away all anxieties and forbodings.—"The Lord will provide." Rev. J. R. Miller, D.D.

Five "Ifs" to Beware Of.

1. "If thou wilt." Luke v. 12. Doubt of divine willingness.
2. "If thou canst." Mark ix. 22. Doubt of divine power.
3. "If I may." Mark ix. 21. Doubt of personal fitness.
4. "If it be thou." Matt. xiv. 28. Doubt of divine word.
5. "If the Lord would make windows in heaven." 2 Kings vii. 2. Doubt of divine providence.

There are no men or women, however poor they may be, but have it in their power, by the grace of God, to leave behind them the grandest thing on earth, character; and their children might rise up after them and thank God that their mother was a pious woman or their father a virtuous man.—Dr. Donald McLeod.

The good pasture which Christ provides for his sheep is eternal life. Nothing withers in it; all is green, all is flourishing.—St. Augustine.