

THOUGHTS

FOR THE

OLD YEAR AND THE NEW.

BY THE

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I.

THE OLD YEAR.

PREFATORY NOTE.

THE writer, having no time for seeking that literary completeness which, nevertheless, he appreciates in others, and naturally placing all thoughts in sermon-fashion, has taken no pains to conceal the sermon-style of these words. They appeared to awaken attention, and to do some good when spoken: they will not be unwelcome in printed form to those who heard them, and for whose good, in the first instance, they are printed. Some congregational allusion is therefore retained, as at p. 38. The whole is commended to the blessing of Him by whose Spirit the growth of the soul, and of the Church, is promoted.

THE OLD YEAR.

“WHEREFORE REMEMBER.”

I AM not sure that our mode of keeping New Year's Day—while it has many advantages—is favorable to calm reflection, or to high and clear resolution. But both ought to attend the exit and entrance of these definite periods of time; by which we measure our being, and as we count which, even the most thoughtless must look in some way at himself. When the number of miles made by the ship is reported, all passengers look back on what they leave behind, forward to what is before. So should we do here, listening to the Spirit when He says to us by the apostle, “Wherefore remember.” Eph. 2: 11. On us who hold firmly the doctrines of free

grace this obligation is peculiarly great. For—

(1.) We hold and teach that forgiveness of sin is free, complete and irrevocable; and that he who enters by faith into Christ may also in the very act enter into peace. We hold and teach that all our righteousness is another's, is made ours by deed of gift, and is no more increased or diminished by us than the quantity of rain, or snow, or sunshine, that falls on us. We preach, "Come to Christ, and find everything in Him." Now we may be easily tempted to think that—taken off the ground of law and obedience *for pardon*, we are taken off it for *everything*; that our career is to be without care, or circumspection, or solicitude. But this is not the case; we have to discriminate. When the Lord pointed his hearers to the lilies that

neither toil nor spin, He did not forbid toiling and spinning, but enjoined trust in God while we toil, and rebuked unbelieving or independent courses. When he said, "Consider the ravens" (Luke 21 : 26), he did not forbid sowing and reaping, storehouses and barns, but he denounced the enlarging the barns, in the expectation that they would give the happiness that could only come from God. Along with our receiving of God's salvation, there must be submission to God's authority, memory of God's goodness, and consecration to God's service; else we turn God's grace into licentiousness. The same apostle who says, "By grace are ye saved" (in v. 8), adds three verses later, "Wherefore remember."

(2.) We enjoin on all who come to Christ to work for him. We learn, to teach—are saved in order to be

saviours, under God, of men. And many do, with motives more or less pure, work for God. It is an age of Christian work. There is danger, therefore, of its being destitute of depth, of reflection, of remembrance. The current language is that our patriarchs were a little severe in their piety. Popular instructors deplore the deficiencies of Edwards and Payson. We magnify our activities. But they are often mere ambitious fuss and bustle. I have seen at least one "great Sunday-school man," on his own showing, who would not be admitted to church-membership here, on the one ground of ignorance of elementary Scripture truth—on his own showing, also. Because we have, and foster, and hope to increase, this Christian laboriousness, we need also to inculcate Christian thoughtfulness. Hence we magnify Scriptural instruc-

tion. Israel did not live forty years on the Passover supper, but had manna from heaven daily. Nor do Christian workers live on the lessons of truth that gave them Christian hope. If they are not learning, going deeper into the Scriptures and into themselves, they become languid, or mechanical, or spasmodic, or quarrelsome, or useless. So, because we are to be hard workers, we must be serious thinkers. "Wherefore remember!"

And, seeing that our New-Year time is so full of social duties, let us do some of our thinking beforehand. "*Remember*" is a great Scriptural word; it is classical in religion. God is always saying it, to the Old Testament Church and to the New—in the Passover and Supper. We are to remember God; the covenant; the way He led us; the deliverances He

wrought. If we are living stones, and a little polished, we must look into the "hole of the pit" whence we were quarried. What the Lord enjoined so much, the apostle may not forget, "Wherefore remember:" and we who try to preach apostolic doctrine must urge it on our hearers.

In recalling *memorable* portions of God's leading, it will be a help to you as readers, as it is to me as writer, to have them classified. Order is a help to thinking, and association to remembering.

1. There are divine acts that affect us *bodily*. Some have had uninterrupted health; and other some never had robust or vigorous health, but, through temperance, care, and God's good blessing, a great amount of work has been done, and all the main purposes of life have been accomplished. There never was any sur-

plus, so to speak; but there was always enough. Remember this, ye mothers with families. You, hard-working men, can remember it.

2. There have been *mental* blessings. (a.) Some have had given them conspicuous qualities in memory, or penetration, or inventiveness, that assured their success in life. Others have had far less—have wanted shining gifts—been notably dull and slow; yet, by making the most of all, turning all the capital to account, all the real business of life has been done. (b.) Some have had admirable advantages in education. Nothing was lacking to them. God secured the time and the means. Some had little—had to learn as they lived; but they have learned, and success in life has not been wanting. (c.) Some have had strong, vigorous, healthy minds, rugged and equable. They never felt

sensitiveness, never grew morbid ; never lived an anxious, tremulous, inner life. This was God's gift. Let it be remembered. Some were far otherwise. It often seemed that only a little more strain, a little heavier pressure, and reason must reel, and the mind be a wreck. But it did not. This is God's gift. Remember it.

(3.) There have been *moral benefits*. Some have had a healthy, regularly-working conscience, that was little troubled. The right thing to do always was the natural thing ; and they have gone on and preserved their integrity. Others have had concealed battles, latent warfares that shook their very being. They were tempted—not in the coarse, sordid, sensual method—with gain or lawless pleasure, but in quite other ways. A taste was being cultivated that promised much, but it led to no good

and had to be abandoned. An attachment grew up, harmlessly it seemed, but it would not be right for it to go on; an interest was felt in another, and carried just to the edge of infringing sacred rights, and it had to be held in bondage: and the effort that was at last a victory was made with unutterable anguish and struggling convulsion of spirit, all unintelligible even to the nearest and dearest. Oh! what paroxysms have been in men's and women's bosoms! but the sacrifice has been made, the Isaacs have been brought to the altar and offered up, and God's approving voice has been heard, saying, "Now I know that thou lovest me." Remember these, and praise Him who carried you through.

"The shadow of the past on future days
Will make them clear to my instructed
sight:

For the heart's knowledge of thy sacred ways,
Even in its deepest, darkest shades, is
light."

4. There have been *secular* blessings. (a.) Some were born to abundance. They never knew what it is to count narrowly the buying power of a small sum of money. It is a great blessing; but he has compensation for the lack of it who has passed through narrow means into abundance, and kept his memory retentive, and his heart pure. (b.) Some began with very little; but God brought them into a large place—the business that was insignificant is now great; the practice that hardly amounted to anything is now large. (c.) And other some never had a margin—never had anything to come and go upon—but somehow always had enough. Families have grown up and been provided for; and though

the cup never was large or bejeweled, it never was empty. "Wherefore remember!"

5. And there have been *spiritual* benefits. Some of you cannot remember the time when you did not have some hope in Christ. You learned of Him, as you learned of sin, and trusted Him. God gave you teachers and grace. Some came to Christian hope without any special difficulty. As the light falls on the eyes, and gently awakes us in the morning, so the light reached their hearts, and awoke them. "Wherefore remember." Other some had months—perhaps years—of revolving and indecision, struggles and relapses, remorse and agony; but at length Christ was apprehended, and the soul that was like the dove that had been away from the ark, finding no rest for the sole of her foot—adrift in

a troubled life—was received into it and at peace. And now, though there is often fighting within, it is not against God, but against self; though there is hard work, it is not to win God's favor, but to show gratitude; though there is often doubt, it is not of God, or his Christ, but of its own purity of motive and rightness of decision. "*Wherefore remember.*"

" Thus far the Lord hath led us—the promise
has not failed,
The enemy encountered oft has never quite
prevailed :
The shield of faith has turned aside or quenched
each fiery dart ;
The Spirit's sword in weakest hands has
forced him to depart."

Now what uses are to be served by this recollection? It is not to a mere exercise of memory for memory's sake the apostle directs.

I. "*Remember,*" that you may keep *alive the right feelings in yourselves.* Remember, for your own sakes, all the goodness is of God. It is in His divine mind to you. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." (Eph. 1:4.) It was given by His hand. No pride can be built on it. No place is here for self-exaltation. He made us to differ. Humility becomes us. Humility is not for its own sake. It is fulfilling its function when leading us to God. When a man thinks he can take care of himself for the day, and that, unless there is something special, he need not have an interview with God, he may wear the meek exterior of a saint, but he is proud before God. When a man thinks he can manage a particular matter without God, and in

his own wisdom, he is arrogant and self-sufficient, though he uses the language and assumes the mien of the deepest lowliness. Remember, in order to be humble.

“Remember,” in order to *be grateful*. If we look at the section of our life in to-day—or in this year—we see but little of it. We must remember, that we may have a full view of it, and see that not only since we lived, but before it, God was providing for us. When he was training our parents in Christian homes, was He not preparing them to train us? When he was founding churches, getting ready ministers, was He not preparing to bless us? The book that influenced us for good—written with tears and prayers—was it not prepared for us? And so through life. Remember all this. Where Paul tells us of forgetting the

things behind, the mercies received are not included, for how often he recounts his own blessings! Gratitude opens the lips in praise, as humility bends the knee in prayer.

II. Remember, that you may be *considerate to others*. All have not received the same advantages you enjoy. Allow for their unfavorable position. So learn toleration of others. You cannot tell against how much they have contended, perhaps are contending now. You cannot tell how early seeds of evil were implanted in their nature—perhaps inherited from their parents. That helpless victim of the wine-cup perhaps had it put to his infant-lips by a mother's or a father's hand, perhaps has in the physical system he received from them the craving for it. Do not despise him; help him, if

you can; and oh! do not, men or women! in the social friendliness of the New Year's Day, or any other day, put this cup to the lips of your fellowmen. Think, if your child were weak there, needed continual watching—if his mother sat up with tremulous eagerness to let him in, lest a domestic should see his condition—how you would regard a neighbor's act who roused for the day, or the night, the uncontrollable passion! "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you." Better deny a luxury to five—if a luxury it be—than give poison to one.

This is an example of that consideration for others that springs from *remembering* ourselves.

III. Remember, that you may *honor the Lord*. There are two ways of conceiving of things. I may count

myself the centre, and the main being to be considered ; or, with widening view and growing wisdom, I may get beyond this, and look on man as the centre and the main object to be considered. Then the main use of a Deity, and the main purpose He is to serve, is to take care of us. The qualities in Him that conduce therefore to we value ; anything not in that direction we depreciate or deny.

It is certain that many persons, more or less unconsciously, think thus of God.

But this is not the true view, however grateful it might be. Man is not the main consideration, but God. Man's chief end is to glorify God. Let us serve this end.

We have been made by Him. Let us remember our Creator. He has the highest and first right to us. Let us not complain that He calls us

to service, however hard and tiresome.

“ The time is short—He cometh
Whose love hath set thy task ;
A crown of life His guerdon,
What other couldst thou ask ?
But let thy consolation
In toil and vigil be—
There remaineth, there remaineth
A Sabbath rest for thee !”

We have been led by Him. Let us praise him.. Give Him gratitude ; lay on his altar constant sacrifices.

“ Thus far the Lord hath led us—the waters
have been high,
But yet in passing through them we felt that
He was nigh.
A very present helper in trouble we have
found,
His comforts most abounded when our troubles
did abound.

Thus far the Lord hath led us—our needs
have been supplied,

And mercy has encompassed us about on every side ;
Still falls the daily manna, the pure rock fountains flow,
And many flowers of love and hope along the wayside grow.

Roman sailors, saved from the perils of the sea, used to hang memorials of their deliverance in the temples of the gods. Soldiers laid up at the shrines the armor in which they conquered. Our hearts are living temples. Hang them round with thankful memories of favor, deliverances, blessings. "He sent redemption unto His people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is His name. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do His commandments: His praise endureth for ever." (Psalm cxi. 9, 10.)

So give Him praise here, and get

ready to give him praise for ever and ever.

“ Thanksgiving and the voice of melody,
This New Year's morning, call me from
my sleep ;
A new, sweet song is in my heart for Thee,
Thou faithful, tender Shepherd of the sheep ;
Thou knowest where to find and how to keep
The feeble feet that tremble where they
stray ;
O'er the dark mountains, through the whelm-
ing deep,
Thy everlasting mercy makes its way.”

II.

THE NEW YEAR.

THE NEW YEAR.

"YE HAVE NOT PASSED THIS WAY HERETOFORE."

THE name of Karl Von Linnè, commonly known as Linnæus, the great Swedish naturalist, is well known. Accustomed to the less generous clime of Sweden and Lapland, when he visited England, and saw a heath covered with the brilliant and innumerable blossoms of the broom and furze, he fell on his knees in delight and adoration. What was common and unnoticed by Englishmen, overwhelmed with delight the appreciative Swede. The daisy is a feature of the English field and meadow, so common that its beautiful name, the "Day's eye," and its modest crimson, white, and gold, escape notice. But when Englishmen settled in Australia, they missed

the daisy. Some thoughtful and enterprising person exported a quantity of plants to the colony. They were received with an ovation, and brought a guinea a root. So it is that common gifts of the bountiful Creator escape our eyes, until some new combination brings them into deserved notice.

And so, in the richer fields of the word, there are phrases, sentiments, and incidents, over which the common reader passes—as we set our careless feet on a weed which is a flower, perhaps, in another land—until something in our condition brings out their point and application, with an eloquence that is irresistible.

And such is the characteristic of this phrase. “Ye have not passed the way heretofore.” Uttered in reference to the march of Israel by the officers of the people, it admits of

applications almost endless to the conditions and circumstances of men, to the end of the world.

The body of emigrants had left the wilderness, and approached the promised land. The manna had already ceased, and the pillar of cloud had been withdrawn. The tribes, like the New Testament Church, after the withdrawal of the apostles and the mighty eloquence of miracles, were left to the use of ordinary means on their march. They were to be guided by the movements of the ark, as the Church is by the word. But if they crowded promiscuously around this holy symbol, it would cease to be of value as a guide, because its place would cease to be visible. A space, therefore, was to be left between it and the people of about two thousand cubits, or a Sabbath day's journey, not because of the sacredness

of the ark, otherwise set forth, but for the convenience of the people, so that from all points it might be seen, and the people follow accordingly; and the reason given is—it was an enemy's country, not the wilderness. They must be guarded in their movements: "For ye have not passed this way heretofore." (Jos. 3:4.)

The first remark to be made from this word as a starting point is that, LIFE IS A CONSTANT PROGRESS AMONG NEW THINGS.

The infant grows to a little intelligence, looks with admiration on the boy's strength and freedom, and awaits impatiently the possession of the same rich gifts. The boy looks up to the young man with some envy, and with much hope. To be emancipated from school and the bondage of books he thinks perfect felicity, and longs for his disenthralment.

Then to be settled in life ; then to be independent ; then to have his family set out on their own career happily ; then to have a quiet rest—this is the constant spring of action in human life. Nothing stands still. The heart is always projecting itself into the future, and the hands, like those of the climber, are taking hold of something above and beyond.

This arrangement, so far from being a proof of man's unhappy condition, is evidence of God's goodness and wisdom. We do not live dull, changeless, monotonous lives. We have stir, variety, hope, excitement. We may become, indeed, restless and discontented. We may chafe and fret, and beat our heads against the bars of impeding circumstances. This is folly and sin. But without this, and a long way on the side of such folly, we can have all the freshness

and stimulus of passing from one stage to another, and enjoying new experiences. It is not the game caught, but the chase, that fascinates ; and it is not so much the things possessed, as those anticipated, that give zest to life.

By the very ordering of our lives, and the methods of God's providence, which we are to recognize and honor, God is saying to us, "Ye have not passed this way heretofore."

" It may be it shall darkly blend
Our love with anxious fears.
And snatch away the valued friend,
The tried of many years.

" But calmly, Lord, on Thee we rest ;
No fears our trust shall move ;
Thou knowest what for each is best,
And Thou art perfect Love."

This assurance believers have, and surely it had better be talked of

among them, and the mind habituated to the facts, than have it buried in silence. It is said to be "greatly wise to talk with our past hours;" it is wise, too, within certain limits, to talk with our coming hours—even the hours of sickness and death. The shock is less to ourselves and to others. Life loses no real joy from it, and gains much in solidity and directness. This is one of the ways in which we are prepared for what can come to us but once in the world. When, at known short notice, Lyman Beecher preached a remarkably good sermon, his brother minister, for whom it was preached, asked how long he had been preparing it. "Forty years," was the reply. It was the outgrowth of the past; the product of much of its thought; and so a true preparation for death is the converse with it through one's life.

The SECOND remark to be made is, that God has somewhere fitting guidance for us in these new experiences, which we are to look for and use as he ordains. Just as truly as the details of this plan were plain to the Hebrews, and they were to look over the clear space to the preceding ark that marshalled them on their way, so are we to look for the divine direction, and it will be received at every point where we have not "passed this way heretofore." With these two principles in mind, let us look at some of the new and untried ways through which we have to go.

These are, for instance, the friends who join the church on the profession of their faith, and who are welcomed into its fellowship. You, dear friends, enter on a new part of your journey. You stand henceforth in a new relation to saints and to the general com-

munity. You become enlisted and acknowledged soldiers in the Lord's army. Cultivate courage. Learn to obey orders; to "keep step;" and never disgrace your uniform. You are engaged in an honorable service. As the eyes of a handmaiden wait on the hand of her mistress, so let your eyes wait on the Lord. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Ask this, and be prompt to obey the indications of His holy will.

You possibly anticipate some fresh and most pleasurable feelings in your new relation. It will be with you according to your faith. You may be disappointed in expectations He has not warranted. This only you may be sure of: whether you feel lively joy or not, when you believe in Christ you are safe.

" 'T is done—the great transaction's done: N
I am my Lord's, and he is mine ;

He drew me and I followed on,
Charmed to confess the voice divine."

May you, as you travel this untrod-
den path, have the realized presence
of the Saviour, "your heart burning
within you as he talks with you by
the way!"

2. As a congregation, we are pro-
ceeding on a new path. To-morrow
we lay the corner-stone of a new
church edifice, and in a new place.
But this is the only thing new in the
enterprisc. We have no new doc-
trine to push, no new scheme to
carry out, no new ambition to grat-
ify. The family has grown, and
needs a larger Sabbath home; and
it is convenient to have it in a differ-
ent place. It is an unspeakable gain
to us that we have the presence of
those among us who went through
all this process before, and whose ex-

perience is a part of our strength. Let the same wise moderation, the same calm, definite, fixed purpose that gave character to this congregation, mark all our proceedings now. We have no new measures; we are not going out of our way to suit "the times;" but, by God's grace, and with His holy truth, to bear our share in the effort to elevate and purify the times. Not by any scenic effects or theatrical representations—not by any vulgar appeals to the whims and fantasies of the hour, but by "the manifestation of the truth," and the devout and solemn expression of the feelings it calls out and feeds, do we hope to glorify God, and to edify one another, and as many as come along with us. We hold this language, "Come with us, and we will do you good;" not because we have social, æsthetic, or other attractions, but because, con-

cerning all who love and rely on his truth, "The Lord hath spoken good."

3. To those who enter on new relationships, it is fitting to say, "Ye have not passed this way hitherto." Among those influences that most affect our happiness and usefulness are our home ties. When young persons make their choice for life, you can forecast with some accuracy what their lives are to be—hardly till then. And of their united lives, the earliest years are the most critical and the most momentous. To learn deference each to the other, to accommodate one's self to the other's ways, to endure without any mutual reproaches the inevitable discomforts of a new condition, to take up and carry without complaint the new burdens—this is what has to be done, with patience, wisdom, and affection, in the earliest years of union. Failure here is la-

mentable, and often permanent, issuing—rarely only in such tragic scenes as violence and brutal murder—but all too often in those unwritten life-long tragedies, where love, and hope, and joy, are each dead and buried, and the two lives that are legally one, and that ought to have flowed happily together, like ice-bound pools, cheerless and cold, have never more a spring-time, all life of love having departed,

“ Leaving themselves an age—

All winters—

War within themselves to wage.”

So also may we say to parents, when the Lord puts the children into their keeping, “Ye have not passed this way hitherto.” The very earliest years are the most critical. To bend the spirit that is naturally self-asserting; to habituate to submission; to curb temper, and to run the young

plastic life into such a mould, that by God's blessing it may be symmetrical, and without a damaging flaw ; this is a task of no little difficulty. You have not, young parents, passed this way heretofore. The Father of us all is the model parent. There is no stint to his love ; but there is no trifling with his authority. He gives what is good ; but he promptly checks what is wrong. Be like your Father in Heaven. Those fragile copies of yourself, so slight that you can toss them in your arms, or fold them in your bosom, have an awful power over you. They who have kissed good-bye to the still marble faces in the coffins, did not realize till then how firmly the little baby hands had grasped the very heart-strings. And not dying, but living and going astray, these children can blight your home-life, humiliate you

before the world, and make you wish for death as a relief. Realize this now, that, with an earnest moral purpose, you may train them to be helps and comforts to you, and to render service and honor to the Lord.

4. When we are entering on any new public duties, we may be as addressed in the text. In a community like ours, it would sometimes be more grateful to one's own spirit to keep far away from all matters of common interest, and to let others have their way. One takes his stand honestly, and expresses his view, and is sadly mortified to find not only that he is regarded as wrong—which may well enough be—but his motives are impugned, his aims misrepresented, his objects caricatured, and this with all the virulence which men commonly throw into the battles of personal and dishonest ambition. In such cir-

cumstances one is liable to revulsion of feeling, and ready to throw off all interest and care about public affairs, in disgust. I have been long enough in the world, and, at least on the edge of public life, to enable me to see how this works, and even to feel the temptation to which I allude. "They will not trim the ship as we wish it; let them have their own way, and if there be a wreck they will see their mistake!" But then, we are all in the ship, and if she goes down we go along. So we must not weakly shrink from public duty; but shoulder our part of the burden manfully, and carry it, and all the more because we are Christian men. Surely, it would mightily please the devil, if he could drive all good men out of public life in disgust, and have the whole thing for his satellites, and be able to say of the kingdoms of the world, "All are

mine, and to whomsoever I will I give them ;" but Christian men must not suffer it so to be. If any man has reason to be firm, courageous, fertile in resources, and capable of bearing reproaches while conscious of his integrity, it is the Christian man. When Christian men are in public office, Christianity is in some degree on its trial. A large number of known religious men are now in offices of trust. "They have not passed this way heretofore." Let us hope and pray that they will, by wisdom, incorruptibility, and capacity, represent favorably that type of life which Christ enjoined, and which the apostles enforced and illustrated.

5. When it pleases God to send trials where there has been unbroken prosperity, the officers' words may be dwelt upon with profit. Then a new and painful experience begins. The

arm that you leaned on is not there; the wise counsel that directed you is missing; or the tenderness that soothed you is enjoyed no more, or the heart that clung to you is beating no longer. You have a new sense of change, loss, and loneliness. But there is a remedy for all this, not that will close up the wound, but that will mollify it, and gradually heal it. Wisdom, strength, sympathy, love, all these are to be found in the Saviour whom you have chosen. He is leading you by a way that you know not. The mind is not now able to judge calmly. Other sorrows that you had seem nothing to this, because this is present; others are remote. Others' bereavements seem little to yours, because *you* feel yours, and not theirs. But the ark of God is before you. Have, if possible, an unobstructed view of Him. He does all this. Could you, if He

came to you in person, as to Mary and Martha, could you look Him in the face and say, "It was cruel, or oppressive, or unwise?" Did He roll back the "gates into the city" and afford you a glimpse of their joy—what should you say? "All I wanted was to have them safe and happy, and behold! God—their God and mine—is doing it infinitely better; what am I, that I should complain? What am I, that I should heave one selfish sigh?"

Or the sorrow is on yourself: you are disabled, laid aside; you say, "I used to be a man among men, now I am useless." Nay, not useless, if you only keep your eye on the Lord, who is leading you. You were not serving yourself, but Him. And he intimates to you that passive, and not active, submission is required, as clearly as if he wrote it on the sky, like the traditional signal to Constan-

tine, or uttered it, as to Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration. David made a rule—as politic as it was generous—that in war, he that should abide by the staff, inactive though he was, should share in the spoils equally with them who fought on the field. And the Son of David, the Captain of Salvation, is no less generous. You must keep looking to Him for light and strength.

“ O New Year, teach us faith !

The road of life is hard :

When our feet bleed and scourging winds us
scathe,

Point thou to Him—whose visage was more
marr'd

Than any man's—who saith,

‘ Make straight paths for your feet ’—and
to the opprest,

‘ Come ye to me, and I will give you rest. ’ ”

When the words in Joshua were uttered to the Hebrews, they were ad-

vancing to that stream which, it is presumed, from this very history, we use as a figurative synonym for death. The Jordan was at hand. They had to cross it to enter Canaan. So each of us shall draw near the Jordan. "Ye have not passed this way hitherto." No man has experience here. "*Once to die.*"

Then, there is nothing but a clear and unobstructed view of God's testimony to guide and sustain you.

"None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good,"

But he is enough. Do not trust to the chance of a hurried introduction to Christ, while you are agitated, and tremulous, in this new and anxious transition. Know Him in life, closely, intimately, as your Saviour. He knows the way. He has gone over it. He traveled it, laden with the in-

tolerable load of our sins. We only carry our sufferings—not our sins. You shall be safe in His hand. “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” Did you ever consider the significance of the names of places connected with his career? He was born at Bethlehem, the *house of bread*. He is the living bread for our souls. He was brought up at Nazareth, the *place of shrubs*, or *sprouts*. He, a tender shoot out of the stem of Jesse. He, agonized at Gethsemane, the *oil-press*. “He trod the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with Him.”

Let this be your comfort in the anticipation, as it will be in the moment, of dying. “Read to me,” said a dying man, “the closing verses of the eighth Romans, beginning

‘We are more than conquerors.’”
Yes, more than conquerors—no loss
in battle, and no doubt about the re-
sult! And we shall dwell in the house
of the Lord for ever—into which He,
the forerunner, hath entered for us.
He has passed this way; we need
not fear.

“ The light that shone through all the past will
still our steps attend,
The Guide who led us hitherto will lead us
to the end ;
The distant view is brightening ; with fewer
clouds between,
The golden streets are gleaming now, the
pearly gates are seen.

O, for the joyous greetings there! to meet
and part no more!
Forever with the Lord and all his loved ones
gone before!
New mercies from our Father’s hand with
each new year may come,
But that will be the best of all—a blissful
welcome home.