

"You should not have gone to sleep feeling so uncomfortable and wicked."

"I know that," said Carrie, sadly. "I did pray the Lord to forgive me, but I was not very earnest about it last night; but the prayer acted as a soothing-syrup, and it was so late, and I was so sleepy, that I did not stop to examine my heart very closely; and this morning it was like that plaster of Paris I used yesterday; it had 'set,' and it won't melt, and it has not broken yet. I am not commencing the new year as I want to commence it. To look forward now, this year looks like an *Illiad* of woes, and a great sea reaches from now to next January; and I must ride on it in a frail bark, in constant danger of shipwreck, and growing weaker and weaker, day by day, I have such a contempt for myself, and I am so depressed."

"Your feelings are very natural," said her mother. "You have been comparing yourself with yourself—what you are now, with what you were, and what you wish to be; and that is always narrowing. Instead of this, you must look to Jesus, who is the great example, and who is the guide and teacher. You can do nothing without His help. This is a good day to commence a new life, because the leaves of this year's record-book are yet clean. Pray that your heart may now be purified—may be whiter than snow. (And Mrs. Dearborn looked from her window at the snow-covered earth; and as she saw how spotless was the covering, her heart was filled with gratitude to Him who made it possible for every soul to plunge into that fountain that is opened for sin and and un-leanness, and rise purified, spotless, into the life of God—life within life—Christ living in us, and we in Him.) If you realize that Jesus is in the boat with you," continued Mrs. Dearborn, after a short pause, "and that in every sin-storm, and in every wave of trouble, His love can be found, and His help received, you will not live so that only sometimes despondency may hope, and darkness sometimes smile into light, but you will dwell in the light, and the ladder of faith will rest on the walls of heaven. Hope for this; pray and strive most earnestly for such a life. Jesus is very anxious for us to come nearer; He knows just how weak we are, and that without Him to guide we only just drift on the sea, at the mercy of every

wind that blows. Remember how He loves us—O, how He loves us; and how wise and strong, and yet how tender He is; and though you meet a thousand perils, you will not be shipwrecked. Do not bend beneath the burden of to-morrow, nor let your eyes fill with the tears of yesterday; but show forth to-day the Saviour's praise, and every danger you pass will make you wiser; every trial will make you stronger; and if you reach that haven that shelters from sorrow and sin before the year passes, His hand will lead you safely through the dark waters, and His voice will bid you welcome to your eternal home. If, instead, you are spared to reach the shore of next January, you can commence the voyage of that year with a braver heart and a surer trust in Him who crowns every year with His goodness."

THEIR OWN COMPANY.

BY REV. THEO. L. CUYLER.

A MAN is known by the company he keeps. He will seek out what is most congenial to him. This elective affinity extends even to the brute creation. A lost sheep will fill the air with its bleatings until it discovers the rest of its flock, and then it bounds away to join its "own company." If I catch a sparrow on my piazza-roof it is an unhappy prisoner until the window is opened and it is again with its feathered comrades.

How natural it is then to read that when Peter and John were released from prison in Jerusalem, they went straightway in the direction that their hearts drew them. "Being let go, they went to *their own company*." They might have torn off their badge of discipleship and slipped back to their fisheries on the shores of Galilee. The hard treatment they had just received from the bigoted Sanhedrin, made the discipleship of Christ a dangerous distinction. It was a good time to compromise and beat a retreat. Weak-kneed men would have "shown the white feather" after one night in a dungeon.

Loose a stone from a hillside, and it bounds by a law of its own to the valley below. Liberate a carrier-pigeon from a ship in mid-ocean, and it cuts its keen