



Thoughts for the New Year

FAITH and reason, religion and philosophy, have many striking things to tell us about the flight of time as measured by the beautiful succession of minutes and hours and days and weeks and months and years. The largest manageable fragment of time is a year, and the beginning of a new year brings home to us more emphatically those solemn lessons that are suggested by the least serious consideration of life and time. "Sands make the mountains—minutes, years;" but we trample the sands under foot, uncounted and unobserved, while the mountain rises up before us, calm, immovable, and the eye must needs rest upon it constantly; we cannot ignore it. Nor can we ignore the passing of a year, however lightly we may heed the minutes that compose it.

And therefore it is that at this epoch of the year, when one year has just ended and another has just begun, even the most thoughtless find themselves constrained to put this question in some form or other to Him who alone can answer it: "Make known to me, O Lord, the number of my days, that I may know what is wanting to me" (Psalm xxxviii. 5). This prayer of the Psalmist springs naturally to our lips whenever anything makes us realize how quickly life is passing away from us. So much of our term of life is gone already and the rest is following so swiftly that the question presses upon us: How much of it still remains? "Make known to me, O Lord, the number of my days." God will not do so; the number of our days and years He keeps a secret to Himself, and this secret is one of the most important