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Sa2

THOUGHTS FOR THE NEW YEAR.

WHILST yet the songs of Christmas fall sweetly on our ears, and the manger of Bethlehem is the centre of our joy and adoration, this octave of Christmas—the Feast of the Circumcision—comes upon us replete with solemn and sobering thoughts. Doubtless the busy, pleasure-seeking world around is not troubled with such; but we, who love our Lord, would fain listen to His voice as it calls to us season by season.

The merry bells, with clang and crash, have ushered in the New Year; the kindly greeting from loving lips has met us again; the happy family gathering around the old home hearth (with, perchance, an empty chair or two to sober its gladness), has been ours once more,—all reminding us forcibly with feelings akin to sadness, of Time's swift fleeting, and of our own sure and certain nearing an endless eternity. How many years are gone from us for ever, with their hopes and fears, their joys and sorrows, their humiliations and triumphs!

The precious moments have irrevocably fled; but of each and all we shall have to give an account when time is at an end. How have we spent them? What have we done for God and to secure our salvation in these by-gone years? How does our account with our Maker stand? These, and such-like questions, naturally crowd upon us to-day, when we look back upon the past and stand upon the threshold of a New Year. Let us answer them honestly, in God's Presence, with a true contrition for past sins and failures; and then we shall better be able to look forward hopefully and trustfully to the dark and uncertain future.

Very dark the new-born year may be to us. There are possible sorrows looming in the distance, from the mere thought of which we shrink in terror; and there are certain inevitable crosses lying athwart our path which *must* be taken up and carried either with a good or a bad grace, as the case may be. But we need not be dismayed; as our day is, so shall be our strength; and He who sends the sorrow or the cross will give comfort and strength along with it, if we do but trust Him.

Let us, then, be courageous, for He is our Friend who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." And let us make good resolutions for the future. There is much for every one to do, both for their own souls and for others; there are sinful habits to root out, and many graces to acquire; there are sickness, and sorrows, and sufferings innumerable, to alleviate; there is a warfare to wage with the glaring vices of a degenerate age, with a subtle-worldliness, which, like a poisonous miasma, penetrates into every home; and with a malignant infidelity, which sets itself up in high places, ridicules religion as an old wives' superstition, and ruins the souls for whom Christ died with a deadly certainty. Battle must be effected, too, with a spurious liberalism, which is threatening to destroy the true freedom of our beloved country. People now-a-days are restless, and want change. The good old