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THE OLD YEAR AND THE NEW.

Another of our allotted "three score years and ten" has been swallowed by the all-devouring past. It has gone with its countless burdens into the keeping of God,—gone with its sweet sunshine and its raving storms—its rainbows of hope and its wrathful thunder clouds of despair,—gone, rich with the joyous laughter of youth, the thank-offerings of the good, and the loving deeds of the beneficent,—gone, mournful with the flooding tears of widows and orphans, the sighing of the prisoners, and the blood of the slain. To many it was throughout a year of peace and prosperity, God smiling success on all their way. They sowed in hope and reaped in gladness. Each day brought its task, and God gave strength to perform that task. Death came not to break the family circle, or to darken with outspread wing the quiet homestead. In such cases how inexpressible the debt of gratitude due to the Giver of all good! But judge not of the future by *your* experience of the past.—The deep hush of the summer noon is the sure forerunner of darkness and tempest.

To how many has the past year been one of unspeakable sorrow and anguish! Sickness, death, or shame worse than death; or one or other of the innumerable calamities to which men are liable, came to quench their joy and to shut in their horizon with gloomy clouds. Parents, Rachael-like, have wept their children because they are not.—Children have been left orphans when most needing a parent's care. Friend has buried friend out of sight. Hundreds of thousands have perished in prisons, on battle-fields, in

flood or flame. But why multiply instances? "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble." Sorrow, distress, death are in the world to remind us evermore that God is angry with Sin. The whole creation, though daily nearing the great day of Emancipation, still groans under the weight of the curse. Year by year the same sad lesson is taught to all the generations of men. Slowly and reluctantly we learn the lesson of our mortality and then pass away like all our fathers to join the countless hosts that dwell in the house appointed for all living. Learn the lesson?—alas how many fail to give it a thought till too late! And how much do we all need an answer to the Prayer of the mighty leader of Israel: "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom!"

Painfully conscious as we all are become of the slight hold we have of time, the swiftness with which it slips from our grasp, our inability to restrain its flight or call one moment back again,—we should all the more eagerly lay hold with a life-and-death grip upon the INFINITE ONE with whom is no passingness, no dying yesterdays, no dawning morrows. United to Him we become partakers of His life; we may laugh at change, and triumph over death; we become forever young, heirs of a blissful eternity. Thus our FATHER finding us in the dismal current of mortality and with all the swiftness of time hurrying downward to perdition, mercifully saves us through faith in JESUS CHRIST and sets our feet on a Rock which the stream of time, beat it ever so fiercely, can never shake. Our mortality