

## NEW YEAR'S PETITIONS.

What shall I ask for the coming year ;  
What shall my watchword be ?  
What would'st Thou do for me, dear Lord  
What can I do for Thee ?

Lord, I would ask for a holy year,  
Spent in Thy perfect will ;  
Help me to walk in Thy very steps,  
Help me to please Thee still.

Lord, I would ask for a heavenly year,  
Humble and yet so high ;  
Help me to sink at Thy blessed feet,  
And yet on Thy bosom lie.

Lord, I would ask for a trustful year,  
Give me Thy faith divine,  
Faking my full inheritance,  
Making Thy fulness mine.

Lord, I would ask for a year of love,  
Oh, let me love Thee best ;  
Give me the love that faileth not  
Beneath the hardest test.

Lord, I would ask for a busy year,  
Filled up with service true,  
Doing with all Thy Spirit's might,  
Whate'er I find to do.

Lord, I would ask for a year of prayer,  
Teach me to talk with Thee ;  
Breathe in my heart Thy Spirit's breath,  
Pray Thou Thy prayer in me.

Lord, I would ask for the dying world,  
Stretch forth Thy mighty hand,  
Thy truth proclaim, Thy power display,  
This year in every land.

Lord, I would ask for a year of joy,  
Thy peace, Thy joy divine,  
Springing undimmed through all the days,  
Be they days of shade or shine.

Lord, I would ask for a year of hope,  
Looking for Thee to come,  
And hastening on that year of years  
That brings us Christ and Home.

Lord, I would ask for a year divine,  
Transfigured from above,  
Fill all its days like heaven's heights  
Shine with Thy light and love.

## RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT.

Life must have its backward as well as its forward look. "Ebenezer" is as necessarily a point in spiritual topography as is Pisgah, from which a coming Canaan is prophetically observed.

The past is meant to be a monitor amid present experiences and also a message for the future. No affectation is greater than the airiness of him who thinks himself superior to the things on which he has built and risen, and which lift him like a weather-vane to the sky. It is silly to affect an unconcern for what is behind us, for out of those things which falsely we call "dead and gone," we have come, and they now live on in us. Genetically, it not precisely grammatically, preterites pass by way of present forms to future-perfects. The man who sneers at his past is like a chick that pecks at the shell from which he was hatched. The thing that has made us must always be revered, unless we are to belie the very characters which we now possess.

Hence an occasional retrospect is fitting for every man because he is a man. Though genealogy is not gospel, it is yet a teaching. Heredity is an educator. "The greatest thing in God's universe is history!" recently observed a noted divine. The things that have been are at least the shadings of the letters that will spell the words of the histories that are to be. The story may be new, but it must be written with the old alphabet. To understand himself and his grandchildren it is necessary that a man make the acquaintance of his own great-grandfather, and prepare for to-morrow by a close and careful retrospect of his own variously assorted yesterdays. He must go back in order to obtain the headway for a long leap forward. If a man refuse to go to school to antiquity he cannot hope that his influence will remain as a proper teacher for posterity. The past gets even at last with those who refuse it. History cannot be scorned with impunity, but will revenge itself in time upon its contemners.

And the retrospect that is worthy of the name must be a very broad one. It is not a matter merely of a genealogical tree, but of an historical forest of multitudinous branchings and multiform foliages. History's record

is not alone contained in that ponderous tome which notes public events, but as well in the tiny volumes that result as the nonpareil records of private lives, which are yet so many microcosms of almost infinite miniature mysteries. The close of a calendar year is a season most opportune for such a retrospect of personal experience. It is the season when the merchant posts up his books to see where he stands. And it is a time when sensitive spirits are moved to thoughtfully review, as in the stillness of the divine presence itself, the scenes and seekings, the joys and grievings, the gains and losings, of the days that have gone beyond recall. By such reminiscence the soul is enabled to see where it stands spiritually, and how near to God is its present position. The case of the Christian traveller is analogous to that of the navigator of the deep seas who must from time to time discover his position by observation of the sun or the stars. The sailor reads the heavens that he may mark off upon an earthly chart the spot where just then his vessel's keel is cutting the seas. He must know how far he has come and where he is that he may unerringly tell whither thereafter his true course lies. It is a kind of measurement of terrestrial directions and distances by means of a stellar topography, and as such affords a fitting symbol of spiritual navigation on life's broader and stormier sea. The Christian must with a frequent periodicity take his observations and read off the knots on his log-line.

But with retrospect should go prospect. As the old year goes from us it whispers a parting word as to a new and possibly a more notable year to come. The obdurate sinner has no future in any comforting sense of the word, but for the humble believer in Jesus it is always "better farther on." While, therefore, the Christian dwells with discriminating meditation upon the past there needs to mingle with his tender reminiscence a sweet prescience to a fairer future to come in God's good time. It is this thought of this dual and yet not divided outlook of the twin temper and sympathy, which is taught in the allegorical story of the two men, one an aged man with hairs whitened by the years and the other a youth with long raven locks, who one day, arm-in-arm, climbed to a lofty height. When they had attained the summit the old man, deliberately mounting a ledge of rock, and turning to look back upon the way they had come, lifted his broad hat, and with solemn voice exclaimed: "O Past! I salute thee!" Thereupon his young companion leaping up to a still higher crag, and excitedly waving his hat above his head, cried with enthusiasm: "O Future I salute thee!"

It is such a double salutation that is appropriate at any anniversary season for every Christian pilgrim. It is but courteous to speed the departing as well as to greet the arriving guest, and with all its shortcomings the past deserves a "Thank you!" as it leaves. For that past in any case has had God in it, and where God has been gratitude should follow. This farewell, however, need not be too tearful, or over sad, since the Christian never loses the best of what has been, and in that farther future that lies beyond the vale shall meet again all that was truly worthy and immortal in the past.—*N. Y. Observer.*

## A DAILY MIRACLE.

Admit Christ into your soul, and with Him comes power. You admit that you have been wretchedly weak on a thousand critical occasions in your past life. You promised yourself that you would never yield to certain temptations and commit certain sins and follies; but you did, and your life is strewn with broken resolutions. Be done with this, and be done with leaning on a brittle reed. Jesus Christ offers to strengthen you with might in the inner man by His Spirit dwelling in you. Ah, you say, that is something supernatural. So it is, for Christianity is based on the truth that the Son of God does enter into the human heart, and just as really affects that heart as the bread you eat affects your body. The whole difference between Saul, the bigot, and Paul, the beneficent, unselfish, heroic apostle was that Jesus Christ had entered into him and transformed him and endowed him with a tremendous power to do mighty deeds of love. This power will come into your soul through the channel of prayer. Try it and see. Work in the same line that you pray. The faith that strives while it prays will conquer; for it creates such a condition of things that God can hear you and will help you.