

The Monthly Advocate.

VOL. II.

JANUARY, 1882.

No. 9.

THOUGHTS AT THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

BY J. TEAZ.

Before the eyes of my readers rest on these pages the shadows of the old year will have passed away forever, and the light of the new will have dawned upon us, and who is there, even among the most careless, that can think of such a transition without having his soul stirred to serious reflection and self-examination? The swift flight of time and the impossibility of recalling it, are equally proverbial. "Time is the warp of life," says one, "Oh, tell the young, the old, the gay, the fair, to weave it well." It is divided into periods—the day, the week, the month, the year, all furnishing opportunities for review. Just as the traveller passing over the country pauses on the hill-top and casts his eyes backward over the landscape, beautiful or otherwise, before proceeding onwards, so the thoughtful mind pauses on the hill-top, the point of time which divides the old from the new. In such an hour what thoughts arise, what memories gather around us! The loved companions of the early months are no longer by our side, the hand whose grasp gave courage, and the eye whose glance inspired to noble daring and doing have long since lost their magic power. Even our own good resolutions, upon which we builded ample hopes of future greatness—have these not too often proved themselves to be but foundations of sand? It is not well, however, to think too much of the irrevocable past, of the lost opportunity, the abused privilege, or the wasted power. Better it is to examine our remaining resources, as well as to test the reality of our attainments so that we may, if possible, enter the new year with some degree of confidence and hope. This is but common prudence in the ordinary affairs of life, but, oh, how it becomes intensified when we enter the sphere of the religious and the spiritual. Life is, or ought to be, a continued growth and development. The new principle planted in the human heart at regeneration is capable of, and is destined to illimitable and eternal development. It is a going onward "from strength to strength." And now, fellow-Christians, as we stand together on the boundary line between the old and the new, let us talk together in regard to our attainments during the past year.

I. Have we made proper attainments in knowledge? This is the privilege as well as the duty of every Christian. There ought to be, as Paul expresses it, a forgetting of the things that are before. In order to this, it is necessary for us to imitate the example of Mary, and seat ourselves at the feet of Jesus, who is the great teacher. We also need the Holy Spirit to illumine our darkened understandings, purify our hearts, and thus prepare them for the reception of truth. The creature,