

GOD'S PRESENCE PROMISED.

There is one prayer that every one may consistently use at the beginning of this new year. It is the prayer which Moses offered to God in the time of his distress: "If I have found favor in Thy sight, show me Thy ways, that I may know Thee, to the end that I may find favor in Thy sight" (Ex. 33:13). We need to be shown. The way is uncertain. The future is hidden. The days to come are shut off from us by a wall of adamant. Not a soul of us can tell what lies a day beyond us. Look back. How many were bright and happy one year ago. When the songs of the Yuletide were sung there was not a sad heart in the home. But since then what have the swift months brought? Sadness, it may be, because of the new-made grave; because of the brightness that has gone out of the home and the life. We never dreamed one year ago of the loneliness there would be in our heart to-day. We never thought that part to-day. We never spent in selecting a casket and a lot in the cemetery or in making the last provision for one whom we loved most tenderly. And so if we know nothing about what lies before us, what strong reason there is for us to seek the promised grace to meet the days that are to come, that we may do it hopefully and in his strength.

Right now, while we read these lines, let us pray, "Show me now Thy ways that I may know Thee, to the end." It is not enough to form a good resolution and keep it for a few weeks; but to form one that will bear its blessing with us in all the year's duties, its joys and its sorrows.

But the best thing about this prayer of Moses is the answer to it. God said to him: "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Two wonderful things for any one to be assured of, and in the promise of which any one may face the future hopefully! There may be wind-ermesses to journey through. There may be parched deserts, there may be fiery serpents, and there may be the weariness of the way, the longing to cross the river and be at rest in the land promised to the fathers; but if God go with us, there will be a Marsh for every parched desert; there will be an uplifted ensign for every fiery trial; for the heart that famishes for the fount of eternal blessing there will always be the smitten Rock, and for the hungry soul God will provide his manna. "My presence shall go with thee." Is not that comforting? What can be more reassuring, or what can enkindle the fire of hope like a promise such as that? With it we may face any trial. There may be thorns in our path; our feet may bleed as we journey; but let us not forget that if the darkness of the cloud is over us for awhile, it is still the assurance of God's nearness. The symbol of his presence is only cloud half time. We think too much of this. Too often we forget that in the darkest night, when the path is unseen, his pillar of fire lights up the horizon and makes the darkness bright about us. However it come, or in whatever way it manifest itself it is still "my presence."

You will recall that when Moses went into "the tent of meeting" (Ex. 33:7-11), the presence of God came and stood by the tent door. What a suggestion it is for the rest of us! O that Jehovah would come and dwell by all our tent doors! There will not be much evil come into our home when the angel of his presence stands guard! There will not much evil go out of it. At the entrance to the gates of Eden there was "the flames of the sword," but at the tent door of Moses there is the presence of the Lord. One of the greatest blessings which could come to our homes this year would be to erect an altar to Jehovah. Let God be at the portal and there can no evil befall us. "Neither can any plague come nigh our dwelling." The presence of the Lord at the door of Moses' tent had a good influence on the tents of others, for "all the people rose up and worshipped, every man at his tent door." It is wonderful how far an influence will carry.

Now if the grace of God is promised for the year, it should be our great privilege to avail ourselves of the blessings of his grace. God is always looking for open doors. His spirit is always on the search of home-coming, roustals to encourage a quicker step to the Father's house. And if we would have his assured favor we must make it available by giving God an opportunity to use us.—United Presbyterian.

NEW YEAR'S THOUGHTS.

Let us walk softly, friend;
For strange paths lie before us, all untrod,
The New Year, footless from the hand of God,
Is thine and mine, O friend;
Let us walk straightly, friend;
Forget the crooked paths behind us now.
Press on with steadier purpose on our brow,
To better deeds, O friend!
Let us walk gladly, friend;
Perchance some greater good than we have known
Is waiting for us, or some fair hope flown
Shall yet return, O friend!
Let us walk humbly, friend;
Slight not the heart's-case blooming round our feet;
The laurel blossoms are not half so sweet,
Or lightly gathered, friend.
Let us walk kindly, friend;
We can not tell how long this life shall last,
How soon these precious years be overpast;
Let love walk with us, friend.
Let us walk quickly, friend;
Work with our might while lasts our little stay,
And help some halting comrade on the way;
And may God guide us, friend!

THE ANCHOR WATCH.

"I often recall," says an old sailor, "a certain night at sea. A storm had come up, and we had put back under a point of land, but still the sea had a rake on us, and we were in danger of drifting. I was on the anchor watch, and it was my duty to give warning in case the ship should drag her anchor. It was a long night to me. Placed by the feeling of it whether the anchor was dragging or not; and how often that night I placed my hand on that chain! And very often since then I have wondered whether I am drifting away from God, and then I go and pray. Sometimes during that long stormy night I would be startled by a rumbling sound and I would put my hand on the chain, and find that it was not the anchor dragging, but only the chain grating against the rocks on the bottom. The anchor was still firm. And sometimes now in temptation and trial I find that way down deep in my heart I do love God, and my hope is in His salvation. And I want to say just a word to you, boys. Keep an anchor watch, lest before you are aware, you may be up on the rocks."

THE GLORY OF GOD.

God's glory will be increased the more we develop according to his purpose. Those glorify him the most who are working most efficiently according to his design. God has sent us in the world; he has established the course of nature, in the midst of which we are moving, and his glory is accomplished the more we fulfil his purpose and carry on the work which he has called us. If we are to aim at this one object of glorifying God, and doing his will we must each aim at one particular way, according to the particular gift and character and endowments he has bestowed upon us. Let each put before himself the fact that he has a particular calling to which he has been directed by God, and let him fulfil that calling to the best of his ability.—The Dean of Ripon.

CANDLES UNDER THE BUSHEL.*

(By Robert E. Speer.)

"I cannot do anything. What is the use of my trying? I have no ability to speak convincingly and my own knowledge and experience are superficial. Moreover, there are others who are qualified and whose business it is to do the work of the church. I can do best by keeping quiet and going on with my own particular work." Under this bushel the light of many a life is hid. To be sure, the supreme work is not public speaking, and no one contends that that is the work of every Christian. On the other hand, who can refrain from talking? Does not every one say many things every day; and do we not talk constantly of things that we think and feel? What right have we to excuse ourselves from speaking of the things on which, if we are Christians, we think and feel most deeply? We have no right to be silent on the points on which our testimony is needed most. No bushel of silence is to be allowed to cover that testimony.

Many people take their lights and use them elsewhere than in the particular darkness they were meant to illumine. A man who could do a great deal by teaching a Bible class, or by helping to clean up bad conditions in a district, or by promoting some needy enterprise of good, lets his powers be absorbed in his business or in some personal pleasure. The light is not extinguished, but it is misdirected. The heat which it represents goes where it is less needed, and darkness which it might have dispelled is untouched. So far as the mission of this bit of light is concerned, it is covered and wasted.

The lights are crowded wastefully together. Some of them might as well be under bushels. They are not lighting any darkness as they were meant to do. Christians are not to be the lights of their own towns only, but of other towns which need light and of their whole land, and, as Jesus clearly said, of the world.

A true light does not need to have anything done to it to make it give light. A wick may need trimming, but if it is a real lighted candle, it needs only to be exposed in order to give light. Christians often need trimming, but if they are real Christians, wherever they are they are shining and men see their light. Just being a Christian is a light making and light giving thing. If there is no light, either there is a cover or there is no Christianity.

Indeed, sooner or later the cover extinguishes the light unless it is removed. That is the way candles are put out. We can blow them out or put the snuffer on them. The very things which act as bushels over the candles of Christian lives—greed, fear, cowardice—are sure to put those lights entirely out unless removed. No amount of attention will keep the light burning long under their suffocation.

In our own homes how much light is there? How much are we contributing? Are we shining at all in the lumber camps, the cottages of the freedom, the homes of the mountaineers, the slums of the cities, in Africa or Asia or South America? Is the light being fairly distributed over all the darknesses?

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

Monday—The Bushel of Greed (Jude 11-23).
Tuesday—The Bushel of Fear (Jonah 1:1-17).
Wed.—The Bushel of Discouragement (1 Kings 19: 1-8).
Thurs.—The Bushel of Doubt (2 Chron. 16: 1-10).
Fri.—The Bushel of Cowardice (Matt. 28: 57-75).
Sat.—The Bushel of Ease (Amos 6: 1-6).

Never yet did there exist a full faith in the divine Word which did not expand the intellect, while it purified the heart.—Coleridge.

*Y. P. topic, Sunday, Jan. 16, 1910: "Candles Under a Bushel." Matt. 5:13-16.