

44 . AN OLD PROMISE FOR THE NEW YEAR.

Let us look at these glorious words. They form one of the brightest constellations in the heaven of promise, and each word is a star of the first magnitude.

See how *plain* the promise is! All that is vital in God's Word is *plain*. There are parts of that Word dark with excessive light: regions that are like the primeval forest, where there is no footprint, and into which man cannot penetrate. Many have foolishly made the attempt, for "vain man would be wise;" but they have come back with bleeding feet, and a weary heart, having learnt by sad experience that in God's Word, as well as elsewhere, "trespassers will be prosecuted." God understands us better than we understand ourselves, and He leads us "in a plain path, because of our enemies." The path of duty, and the path of promise, are both plain. We are on an important journey, and our time is limited; let us therefore be on our guard against the temptation to wander; and leave the mysteries, till we have more time, and clearer light. Dr. Watts, who was once a trespasser, and who reaped the trespasser's punishment, said, when his feet again trod the narrow path: "Oh, how I thank God for the simple promises!" So let us say as we turn to our text. It is milk for babes. There is only one word of two syllables in it. We may give it as a first reading-lesson to the little child, and yet it has in it a meaning at which the highest archangel will wonder. It is well that it should be so; for the promises, like the stars, are made for night. When the sun is shining, the stars are not visible, but when the sun disappears, the stars steal out in their silvery beauty. So it is with the promises: in the sunshine of prosperity, their beauty is invisible, but let the night of adversity throw its dark shadow round us, and a thousand promises will appear, to throw light upon our path, and comfort into our hearts. The full beauty of a promise is never seen till it has been read through tears. Look up, then,