

earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

Saul had promised a reward to the hero who should subdue the Philistines' champion. David secured the reward, at least in part, but subsequent history shows that it would have been better had he not taken it. They who fight God's battles should be content with God's rewards.

London, Ont.

Bible Study. One Verse at a Time.

Paper III.

Isaiah 55: 2.

BY MRS. ANNA ROSS.

Prayer at the beginning. "Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me thy statutes." Our God delights to teach the teachable.

1st clause, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?" and, "and your labor for that which satisfyeth not?"

The first verse calls the thirsty and poverty-stricken; but thank God for this second one. This verse gives a wider call. In it God is after those who are busy with both hands trying to get satisfaction out of the things of the world.

These are not the poverty-stricken. These have money, which they spend without stint for things that cannot feed them. If they have not money they have power to labor, and they work without stint for things that cannot satisfy. Those who have neither money nor skill to labor have time,—the precious minute money, which is a price in their hand with which to get wisdom. But they spend that without stint, seeing they have nothing else, for things that cannot profit. It goes to one's heart to see so much precious time, especially hours of spring-time, spent planting bubbles or wild oats. Foolish crowds, in the light of one brief human life and a long eternity. But God does not pass them by. He cries out to them all, "Hail wherefore do ye eat so? Come to a better feast, the feast that I have spread."

3rd, "Hearken diligently unto Me."

What is the feast? It is indicated here, "Hearken diligently unto Me." Men are called from the husky feasts that the world has spread to the real feast of God's own words. This is not a vague call to accept salvation: it is a definite call to sit down at the feet of the great Teacher and study seriously His word—His words. This clause will bear very real thought and prayer.

4th, "Eat ye that which is good."

There are those, like the old Highlander with his text on the wall, who are afraid to eat God's good words, but leave them for those who are holier than themselves. If anyone doubts his God given right to take God's sweetest word as his own, let him study the first clause of this verse and then this fourth one, that he may see if the invitation is limited to the holy people or not.

A buff farmer, with a large soul and a clear head, was seated, an invited and an honored guest, at a dainty wedding feast. A doctor of divinity, also an honored and invited guest, entered the room a little later. The minister, a gentleman to the finger tips, but a true man, and a warm friend of the old farmer, grasped his hand and said, with the twinkle in his eye that meant much, "You here? Mr. W.!" The farmer, with a counter twinkle, returned the grasp with the words, "I'm here because I was invited, Sir."

That scene at that dainty feast, has always seemed to me an apt illustration of the

common ground occupied by saint and sinner when sitting down at the feast of God's word. Each has come *because he is invited*, and that invitation gives equal right to both.

5th, "Let your soul delight itself in fatness."

God's word is the richest feast to which we can be set down. The promises stop at nothing. Pardon, life, love, power, guidance, even fellow heirship with the Son of God Himself. Faith staggers at the fullness and fatness of the feast, refusing to partake, because these things are "too good for us." But God, at the head of His own spread table says, "Eat ye that which is good; and let your soul, (do not be afraid)—let your soul delight itself in fatness."

"Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me thy statutes." These are Royal invitations. They are published commands. They are statutes of the King.

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How to Get a Fresh Start.

Eph. 4: 22-32.

Topic for Jan. 4.

The trees this January have pushed off their old, useless, disfiguring, dead leaves, and now their branches are bare. Perhaps, when this first happened, some one might have said to the trees "Why don't you hold on to the old leaves?" They are ugly, to be sure, but they are all the covering you have." God knew better. He knew that the old must go before the new ones can come, the evil be driven out before the good can enter.

This is why Paul, in speaking about the transformation that must befall every Christian, gives as the first step the putting away of the "old man,"—the bad habits, the base words, the rash and impure and foolish thoughts. Here is a young man in a business that requires him to do unnecessary work on Sunday. Shall he give it up, not knowing where his living is to come from? Yes. Not even God can put a new coat on a man till he has taken off the old coat.

Suppose a beggar were taken into a royal palace and told to strip himself and bathe and then leave his dirty rags where they were and enter the next room, where he would find awaiting him a suit of cloth of gold. Would he not be foolish not to obey? It is more than a king who tells us to do just the same thing—to drop at once from our lives whatever is evil, being sure that God will put in its place something infinitely better.

That is the most fitting work we can do at this New Year's season. May this meeting to-night give us all a determination to throw away our filthy rags and put on the glorious garment of Christ's righteousness.

Thoughts to Ponder.

God will not love you any more this year than the past year; He cannot. But the vast difference that this year may hold over the last is that we may come to love God more and understand better His great love for us.

Moses got his new start at the burning bush. He had known God before, had boldly dared and suffered for Him, but at the burning bush he caught a new vision of

God and went forth to dare and suffer more than ever before. That is what we need in starting out on this new year—some new vision of God. We can have it if we will.

George Macdonald once said that the best preparation for the future is the present well seen to. Our best start in 1903 is a good January 5th, or what is left of January 4.

The new start we all need is much more likely to be an inner change than an outer one. We have been going to church, perhaps, regularly enough; what we need is to look to the motives of our church-going. We have been praying regularly, perhaps; what we need is to make our prayers more real.

A great many will have no New Year at all in any real sense; 1903 will be only 1902 prolonged. Only a new purpose can make a new year.

For Daily Reading.

Mon.	Dec. 29.—A penitent heart.	Matt. 3: 5-12
Tues.	Dec. 30.—Confessing lips.	Matt. 19: 15-19
Wed.	Dec. 31.—A renewed spirit.	Ps. 51: 1-10
Thurs.	Jan. 1.—An enlarged faith.	Luke 17: 1-6
Fri.	Jan. 2.—A forward look.	Phil. 3: 8-14
Sat.	Jan. 3.—A persevering habit.	Gal. 6: 6-10
Sun.	Jan. 4.—Topic. How to get a fresh start.	Eph. 4: 22-32

Look Up and Not Down.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, lamenting the death of his little son—

"The hyacinthine boy for whom
Morn well might break and April bloom"
once said, amid the ashes of a burned out hope:

"Was there no star that could be sent
No watcher in the firmament,
No angel from the countless host
That loiters round the crystal coast,
Could stop and heal that only child,
Nature's sweet marvel undefiled;
And keep the blossom of the earth,
Which all her harvests were not worth?"

We sit in the heart of our sorrow and ask: Why is it? or we want God to come and sit down by our side and talk to us for a little while. And the longing is a most sacred and beautiful one. But, may be, God is calling us through the still small voice of sorrow to rise and sit with him for a little season, where the outlook is less clouded. "Come apart," said Christ to his disciples, "and rest awhile." We can read a larger meaning in the dealing of God when we sit with him in the center of his higher purpose. There will be a wider measurement of life and the so-called dark providences will take on the light of noon.

The loneliest missionary in the world is said to be one stationed in Canada, on an island near the mouth of Mackenzie River, above the Arctic circle. He is two hundred and fifty miles from his white neighbors, and for two winters no ship went there.

The world is so planned that a man can accomplish more in six days than in seven—if the seventh be devoted to rest and worship.