

III.

AN OLD PROMISE FOR THE NEW YEAR.¹

"I will bless thee ; . . . and thou shalt be a blessing."—GEN. xii. 2.

THE joy with which we enter upon a New Year is always tempered with a feeling of anxiety. Life is felt to be fleeting and uncertain, and man to be but as a bubble floating on the solemn stream of time. Our companions disappear from our side, and we are painfully reminded that "we are strangers . . . and sojourners," like "all our fathers ;" and that "our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding." The good wishes, that greet us as we step out into the year, have a minor tone, and seem to be but the echoes of "voices gone." We look backward with a sigh, and onward with a tremor. We feel our own helplessness, and that to lean on those around us, is to build on the shifting sand. We long for something permanent and abiding. We crave "some solid ground to rest upon." The "heart crieth out for God, even for the living God." He hears our cry ; and, lifting upon us the light of His countenance, lovingly whispers : "I will bless thee ; and thou shalt be a blessing." May we have ears, to hear, and hearts, to receive, this twofold promise ; and, making it our watchword, go out into the year with a bright face, and a firm step!

Notice, *first*, what God promises to do to us : "I will bless thee."

¹ A New Year's Sermon for 1884.