

MORNING WATCH

A Herald of Christ's Presence, as Bridegroom, Reaper and King!

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THE NEW YEAR BEFORE

The familiar thought is with us again as a New Year dawns that the measures of time, designated years, indicate degrees or steps of the Christian's journey in the path that leads upward into endless life and bliss. Time is indeed of incalculable importance, as a factor in the experience of creation in this world in which we live - especially to the children of God in this Dispensation, who have before them the highest of objectives.

The Word of God and experience agree that the things worth while, the true and imperishable riches, are laid hold of and secured by degrees, and that, through hard struggles and bitter trials of the years. Our Lord said, "How narrow is the gate of life! How difficult that way leading thither! How few are they that find it." Matt. 7:14; Diaglott.

The faithful follower of Christ realizes the wisdom of pausing at the passing of another milestone and at the dawn of a new year, to take account of his spiritual welfare and progress - his failures and successes; and if reflecting anew and the more earnestly if possible, on the great objective before him; and also upon those vital issues that are inseparably linked with his solemn covenant to walk with his Savior in the sacrificial way. Such prayerful retrospect cannot be otherwise than spiritually profitable to the loyal and obedient child of God, who makes such reckoning in lowliness of mind and in full heart surrender to the Lord. His sentiments will be as expressed in the familiar lines:

Thy will be done! I will not fear
The fate provided by Thy love;
Though clouds and darkness shroud me here,
I know that all is bright above.

A consciousness of failings and defections impose upon all the faithful, at times a deep sense of unworthiness, as they reflect upon the past, and recognize that they have fallen short of the ideal set before them in the perfect pattern. But all should hearken to the various notes of encouragement, such as the Apostle suggest - "Whenfore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that

is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 1:13.) While remembering that our refuge is in constant remembrance of the solemn charge to "keep our garments unspotted from the world."

As we then at this time, pause to reflect on the year just gone, and look forward to another just ahead, our position is one eminently fitting for God to speak to us. May He find our spirits subdued and our hearts humbled in His presence, and may we, deep in our souls, hear what His Holy Word speak to us, at this stage of our Christian experience and where we now stand on the stream of time. As followers of the lowly Jesus, we have enlisted under the Christian banner, and taken upon ourselves the vows of discipleship and loyalty to the only true Savior and Helper. In this relationship we hope to prove our loyalty and fidelity as members of His sacrificial Body, and subsequently to be accounted worthy of the glory that shall follow. But the completion of the journey remains for the future; and we are still as travelers in that narrow path so expressly mentioned by the Savior - the only way of life as yet open, but a way beset with deadly perils and unnumbered evils and we would not be equal to the task ourselves; therefore ceaseless vigilance is the price of security.

Are there those who entered the past year in careless neglect of their behavior as New Creatures who have carried the same through all its days and weeks and months? How unfortunate the retrospect of such! There are doubtless those who began the past year with deep feeling and many

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serious thoughts and purposes, and have not entirely lost them to this moment, but have permitted another year of grace to go by without bringing them to anything practi-

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cal. How melancholy the reflection that nothing better has come of all that seriousness! Nor is there any among us, to whom this New Year is not a reminder of time misimproved, and of some measure of fault, resulting.

Have we been slaves of doubtful habits and practices? The virgin year pleads with us to throw off the yoke, and lay them aside forever. Have we been hindered in our better convictions by unfavorable and unspiritual associations? The great Lord of all now calls upon us to dissolve them. Have we hitherto been numbered, to some extent with the worldly and prayerless where the thoughts and conversations are of the earthy? The scared requirement is: "Come out from among them, and be separate." Have we, because of malice or bitterness been at variance with our friends or brethren? Have we given place to hard thoughts and bitter feelings towards any? The message to us then is: "Purge out the old leaven of malice" - cleanse our hearts of such unchristlikeness - carry not a resentful spirit into those pure hours ahead which God is showing His willingness to give us. This will not mean that we will love peace with everyone more than we love the Will of God. It will not signify that we will compromise the Truth and our sacred duties to maintain it, or yield to any kind of appeasement process in order to win the good feelings and approbation of others. No! The 'purging of the old leaven of malice' relates to the subduing of personal animosities and grievances and ill feelings to-

wards others who may not have treated us with exactly the kind of dignity and recognition that one might naturally desire. It is here that Christlike lowliness must hold the reins, and let patience have her perfect work.

Why should any of us fail to go into the New Year with a new life, marked with a renewing of our consecration, and rejoicing in the blessedness of a complete absolution? We may have been far from Christ, but He is a great Savior. We may have fallen sadly and deeply; but if we now are willing to part with our besetting sins, our inward and secret selfishness and pride, condemnation is gone, and we are free, in proportion as we believe it and take the glad tidings to our hearts. We may feel burdened as we survey the past; but it is our privilege today to lay that burden down, if we will but give our hearts' consent to the obedience of faith. Let us throw off our gloom and trembling then, with all unchristlikeness and let our fears and sadness be buried with the departed year. Let our souls be cheered, and comforted by the sweet offers of the mercy-seat provided through God's sacrificial Lamb. To Him therefore let us ever be directed. Let us find in Him our most complete Savior and Refuge.

May the Lord Bless you all in the Coming New Year!

A Voice From the Past

"The opening year finds the whole world in a state of financial depression which will doubtless be worse before improvement comes. Since we are advised in Scripture that the Day of the Lord's presence will be a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation, some may be inclined to anticipate too much, too speedily. This is a tendency which all need to guard against.

"We should not for a moment lose sight of the apostles striking illustration of the trouble of this day, as recorded in 1 Thes. 5:3. From this illustration we should expect spasmodic trouble and distress of nations: and that these will become more frequent and more serious until they reach the climax stated by the prophet, and result in the death of present systems and the delivery of the children of this world into the New and better, the "golden" Millennial age, in which the King of righteousness shall rule and reign Lord of all, blessing all the families of earth.

"To those who have made the Lord even the Most High their refuge and habitation, we would say: "Trust in the

Lord and do good;" "He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light and thy judgment as the noonday." In this connection we commend to your careful study Psalms 37:1-19 and 91 entire. Strengthen yourselves, arm and equip yourselves with the whole armor of God, remembering your part in the conflict of this day, that it is not with flesh and blood but with the spiritual darkness, and spiritual wickedness in high (controlling or leading) places and the fiery darts of the wicked one. Thus so much the more as ye see the day drawing on "strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a feeble heart, BE STRONG! FEAR NOT! Behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you." The signs then of the days of vengeance and recompense are sure signs of the Lord's presence, and that our redemption, deliverance, and exaltation, and the blessing of the world, are nigh at hand." -

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