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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

NEW YEAR GREETINGS.

Rejoice, my fellow-pilgrim! for another stage is o'er,
Of the weary homeward journey, to be travelled
through no more!
No more these clouds and shadows shall darken all
our sky!
No more these snares and stumbling-blocks across
our path shall lie.

Rejoice, my fellow-soldier! for another long cam-
paign
is ended, and its dangers have not been met in vain;
Some enemies are driven back, some ramparts over-
thrown;
Some earnest given that victory at length shall be
our own!

Rejoice, my fellow-servant! for another year is past;
The heat and burden of the day will not for ever
last;
And yet the work is pleasant now, and sweet the
Master's smile,
And well may we be diligent through all our "little
while."

Rejoice, my Christian brother! for the race is nearer
run,
And home is drawing nearer with each revolving
sun;
And if some ties are breaking here, of earthly hope
and love,
More sweet are the attractions of the better land
above.

The light that shone through all the past will still our
steps attend,
The Guide who led us hitherto will lead us to the
end;
The distant view is brightening,—with fewer clouds
between,
The golden streets are gleaming now, the pearly gates
are seen.

Oh, for the joyous greetings there! to meet and part
no more!
For ever with the Lord and all his loved ones gone
before!
New mercies from our Father's hand with each new
year may come,
But that will be the best of all—a blissful welcome
home.

H. L. L.

Religious.

THE NEW YEAR—A PRINCIPLE TO START WITH.

BY EDWARD STANE, D. D.

It is of great moment in all affairs of im-
portance to start with a right principle.
At the beginning of a journey, which is
likely to be long and toilsome, how much
depends upon your taking the right road
at the outset. In rearing an edifice what
consummate folly to forget that its stability
will be the consequence of a solid founda-
tion.

Let the young man who is just going out
into the world see to it that he begins right.
If he sets out with wrong principles and false
views he is certain in the end to be a dis-
appointed, and it is next to a miracle if he
is not also a dishonoured man. Far less
infatuated, as it has often been said, would
be the conduct of the mariner who should
take his ship out of port, and trust her to
the treacherous ocean if she have neither
rudder nor compass, than that of the young
man who launches out into the world with
no fixed principles to guide him, and no
unvarying pole to point to. There are two
things that every man, and not the young
alone, should look to let him see that he
keeps a right end in view, and that he takes
the right way to attain it.

Such observations are never out of place.
There are, however, times and circumstan-
ces which give them a special propriety.
And is not the present such a time? We
are standing on the threshold of a new
year. The past is gone! gone for ever!
gone, never to be regained, never to be
improved! On what a crowd of follies,
failures, disappointments, weaknesses, sins
—and to some of the readers of this paper,
perhaps, as well as to its writer, on what
deep and unexpected sorrows—has the cur-
tain dropped! My God in his infinite mer-
cy forgive all the sins of the past, and
cleans us from the guilt of them all in the
blood of his dear Son! But now we start
afresh. If we cannot recall the past, God's
forbearance is giving us a future. Before
we enter upon it let us pause a moment for
forethought, for prayer, and to gather up
our strength; to look to the end we are
aiming at, and the path by which we pro-

pose to reach it. Especially let us see if we
may not find in the great storehouse of truth
and wisdom just such a principle as we want,
at once to guide us in the right way and to
uphold us in pursuing it.

Such a principle I think I have found in
the words of the Son of God, where he
says, with a majesty and a consciousness
of almighty strength and infinite resources,
appropriate only to himself,—WITHOUT ME
YE CAN DO NOTHING. They were address-
ed, as we know, to the twelve, and were,
no doubt, intended to have a special force
as applied to them and their circumstances.
But words like these are of no private in-
terpretation; they are meant for us all.
Let us see how they apply to us, and what
we may learn from them.

Our utter helplessness apart from Christ
is a lesson very hard to be learnt; a lesson
which it takes some all their life-time to
learn; a lesson which some never learn at
all. And yet it is what in mathematics
would be called an axiom, and in moral
science a first principle; and in all the im-
portant affairs of human life it is a principle
to start with. Let us ponder it.

"I can do nothing without Christ. In
myself I am impotent to all that is good,
and noble, and wise; unable to live in such
a manner as to make sure of the great end
of life, to benefit my fellow-creatures, or to
glorify my Creator; helpless to secure my
own salvation, or to promote the salvation
of others. Is that true?" I am not care-
ful here to notice the distinction which
metaphysical theology has drawn between
natural inability and moral; or, as it is
otherwise phrased, between the want of
ability and the want of disposition. Let
that go; the distinction may serve a valu-
able purpose on other occasions. It makes
for little to mine. Christ does not quali-
fy his words. Why should I stop to qualify
them? He says, no doubt with as much
truth as simplicity, "Without me ye can do
nothing." Then, if this is true, do you
not see that in the economy of life it is a
fundamental truth, and that you will make
a fatal mistake if you do not at the outset,
and always, recognise and act upon it.

And by how many is this mistake made;
and, who find it to be a fatal mistake only
when the discovery is too late?

How prone, for example, is the sinner,
under a sense of his deficiencies, sins, and
guilt, to try by himself to obliterate his
guilt, to hide his sins, to make up for his
deficiencies. He will do anything and
everything that he can do; he will reform,
he will become religious, he will go to the
house of God, he will take the sacrament,
anything, in short, but go to Christ. Now
this all arises from his ignorance of his lost
and helpless condition. He is unwilling to
be stripped of all his performances, and all
his virtues. But, sinner, you must; your
self-righteousness must go. It is all rags,
"filthy rags." It must all go, and in the day
when it does go, you will let it go with loath-
ing, and you will bow down your proud head
in the dust, and the Holy Spirit will whisper
in your heart, Christ alone, Christ alone.

"The lofty looks of man shall be humbled,
and the haughtiness of man shall be bowed
down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted
in that day" (Isa. li. 11). Be assured, sin-
ner, that without an atonement there is no
forgiveness, and without Christ there is no
atonement. Pardon flows from blood; not
from prayers, not from alms, not from ordi-
nances, but from blood, the blood of the
Lamb. There is no pardon out of Christ,
and no spiritual life. You are but a dead
soul out of Christ;—a branch severed from
the vine, fit only to be burnt. "There is
none other name under heaven given among
men, whereby we must be saved; neither
is there salvation in any other" (Acts iv.
12). Then it is clear that the sinner can do
nothing without Christ.

But it is not the sinner only, the sinner
who has not yet found pardon and peace,
who needs to have this truth impressed upon
him. It is a principle just as necessary in its
application, and quite as useful, to the believ-
er. He indeed knows it. But he does not
always realize it—does he always even re-
member it? Why, it was to those who
believed in Him that Christ himself ad-
dressed the words.

To his fellow-Christians, then, the writer
now turns—to those who with him profess
to have found Christ, and to have found
their salvation in Him, and with whom this
is no mere profession, but a great and
blessed reality. Let us, at the beginning
of this new year, take up this principle
afresh, and carry it with us through the
whole economy of the Christian life, that
without Christ we can do nothing. Apart
from Him there will be no growth, no fruit-
fulness, no comfort. Just as we have our
natural life not in ourselves, but in God—
"in him we live and move and have our be-
ing"—so spiritually every believer lives and
moves and has his being in Christ. The life
which covers the branches of the vine with
foliage and fruit, is not in the branches, but
in the stem. Remember his words, "I am
the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth
in me, and I in him, the same bringeth
forth much fruit: for without me ye can do
nothing."

But granting that he cannot bring forth
"much" fruit unless he abide in Christ, is
any one inclined to ask if he cannot bring
forth some? To drop the figure, is it im-
agined that, although a man may not attain
to the higher degrees of excellence in the
Christian life, he may yet maintain a fair
profession and a creditable character with-
out this moral self-depreciation? Has he
not strength of his own sufficient for the
fulfilment of the ordinary and minor duties,
and for the endurance of the common trials
incident to the Christian profession? Does
he want supernatural help to resist the little
encroachments which the world will strive
to make on the domain of his spirituality?
Must there be a conscious and designed re-
liance upon Christ in those petty tempta-
tions and conflicts with evil which occur
every day, and in all the changing cir-
cumstances of every day? And is this to
last as long as life lasts? Are there not
fathers in Christ as well as babes? and is
the hoary head, rich in knowledge and ex-
perience, and silvered with the snows of fifty,
sixty, seventy winters, as dependent still
upon this union with Christ as the young
neophyte in the ways of God? Indeed, it
is even so. We are none of us anything
but branches; and a branch severed
from the vine can bring forth no fruit.
"Without me" is not to be understood
as implying assistance merely—the co-
operation of grace with our own virtue—
it means much more than this, and cor-
responds with the previous statement, "the
branch cannot bear fruit of itself." Out
of Christ—without Him in the sense of
being separate from Him and independent
of Him—there is no fruit-bearing at all,
for the obvious reason, that, out of Christ,
as we have said, there is no life. Augus-
tine puts this very concisely and forcibly.
"He who thinks that he can bear fruit by
himself has no life; he who has no life is
not in Christ; he who is not in Christ
is not a Christian." We cannot be Chris-
tians without Christ; how, then, without
Christ, can we live and act as Christians
ought?

Since, then, it is so, let me get myself
grounded and thoroughly established in the
conviction of my own own impotence and
utter helplessness for all the purposes of
the Divine life apart from Christ. This is
a principle for me to start with. I have,
indeed, known it before, and never, I trust,
have altogether forgotten it; but let me re-
new my experimental acquaintance with it
now, as this new year begins, and while its
successive months, weeks, and days call me
to the high and difficult, but noble and
generous requirements and privileges of the
Christian profession, let me think again and
again, "I can do nothing without Christ."

But this principle, rightly understood,
will discourage no one; it will rather give
direction and encouragement to all. It
takes us from a wrong foundation only that
we may build up the right. It draws us
away from ourselves, where we can find
nothing but weakness, and pollution and
sin, that it may lead us to Him in whom we
shall find an infinite fulness of life, and
light, and purity, and strength. Having
nothing in ourselves, we have everything in
Christ.—1 Cor. i. 30, 31. Go forth, then, to fulfil the obligations of

life, and to encounter the trials that await
you this new year, deriving all your strength
from Christ. You could not have borne the
heavy calamity—it may be some one in par-
ticular of unwonted severity—that befel
you in the year just closed, if he had
not sustained you. But you found his
grace all-sufficient. And if other conflicts
or bereavements, other tribulations and deep
waters, should lie before you, be assured
that the hand which leads you into them is
able to bring you through. The writer has
often thought that a special emphasis lies
on those words of the elder, as he describes
to John in Patmos who the blessed white-
robed myriads were that stood before the
throne, pealing their lofty hymn of triumph
to God and the Lamb, in which he says,
"These are they which came out of great
tribulation." Not a single Israelite was
drowned in the Red Sea, when their foes
"sank into the bottom as a stone." And
none of God's redeemed ever will be left
to perish in any flood that may for a season
overwhelm them. Let them in patience
possess their souls, and with a fortitude
becoming those who consciously lean on
Almighty strength, encounter all temptations
and temptors, all opposition and all duty,
all self-denial and all toil, judging, mean-
while, as the apostle evidently judged, that
"I can do all things through Christ which
strengtheneth me," is only another version
of the words, "Without me ye can do
nothing."

"Begone, unbelief; my Saviour is near,
And for my relief will surely appear.
By prayer let me wrestle, and he will perform
With Christ in the vessel, I smile at the storm."

SLEEP.

There is no fact more clearly established
in the physiology of man than this, that the
brain expends its energies and itself during
the hours of wakefulness, and that these
are recuperated during sleep; if the recu-
peration does not equal the expenditure, the
brain withers; this is insanity. Thus it is
that, in early English history, persons who
were condemned to death by being prevent-
ed from sleeping, always died raving
maniacs; thus it is, also, that those who
are starved to death become insane; the
brain is not nourished and they cannot
sleep. The practical inferences are these:—

First, those who think most, who do
most brainwork, require most sleep.

Second, that time saved from necessary
sleep is infallibly destructive to mind, body,
and estate.

Third, give yourself, your children, your
servants—give all that are under you—the
fullest amount of sleep they will take, by
compelling them to go to bed at some regu-
lar hour, and to rise in the morning the
moment they awake; and within a fortnight,
nature, with almost the regularity of the ris-
ing sun, will unloose the bonds of sleep the mo-
ment enough repose has been secured for the
wants of the system. This is the only safe
and sufficient rule; and as to the question
how much sleep any one requires, each
must be a rule to himself—great Nature will
never fail to write it out to the observer un-
der the regulations just given.

SATAN VANQUISHED.

There is a story how the devil appeared
to a dying man and showed him a parch-
ment roll, which was very long, wherein was
written on every side the sins of the poor
sick man, which were many in number; and
there were also written the idle words he
had spoken in his life, together with the
false words, the unchaste words, and angry
words; afterward came his vain and ungodly
words; and, lastly, his actions, digested ac-
cording to the commandments, whereupon
Satan said: "See here, behold thy virtues;
see here, what thy examination must be." Whereupon the poor sinner answered: "It
is true, but thou hast not set down all, for
thou shouldst have added, and set down
here below: 'The blood of Jesus Christ
cleanseth us from all our sins; and this
so should not have been forgotten: 'Who-
ever believeth in Him shall not perish, but
have everlasting life.'" Whereupon the