Reading. Sundan

Year unto Year.

As year unto year is added, God's promises seem more fair, The glory of life eternal, The rest that remaineth there; The peace like a broad, deep river That never will cease to flow; The perfect, divine completeness That the finite never know.

As year un o year is added, Go i's purposes seem more plain, We follow a thread in fancy, Then catco and lose it again; But we see far on in the fu ure A rounded, perfected bliss; And what are the wayside shadows, If the way but leads to this?

As year unto year is added, And the twilight of life shall fall, May we grow to be more like Jesus, More tender and true to alt. More patient in trial, more loving, More eager his touth to know, In the daily paths of his choosing More willing in faith to go.

Retrospect and Prospect; or, the Old Year and the New.

BY REV DR. STANFORD.

"Because Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of Thy wings will I re-Joice."-PSALM IXIII 7.

In this passage we have first the lan guage of review, and nex the linguag of resulve. "Thou hast been my help" The words are vital, for to ether they give a short report of a long story "Thou hat been my he p." Ween? Let that be the first qu st on noticed under review. When? Way this morning. The when at which we glance is the year. The last Sunday of the year is a day on which we seem to stard for a little breathing moment on t e bridge of time. We look up the river and down the river; we look this way. and that way; and while we stand just here looking at the past, we s y to Him who is Lord of all time, "Thou hast been our pelp." Ever one of you look back upon a marvellous individual story Sometimes when you have been out or your travel- of recreation you have go into a park and have teen designted to look up an avenue of tre s, trees, trees, tree , pillars of tre s, ve arched with green le ves t en ad leadi g fa into he distance; and such a road has been our road in the wast. For ten, twenty thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy years some of you lo k back thr ugh an avenue of time! 365 days days-take the las measurement- h t n avenu- of me cies overarching mercies, but si its of the way, marking the h 1, the mai ifo d wonderful help; many helps in one. In sunshi e and hado, in summer an winte , on tie l nd and on he sea, up hill and doen hill, sometimes in day when y u have been obliged to un erstand the las of health, when a pui h and disease invide this tremiling h use of clay; smetimes when your intellect seemed to be strained to a tension which was unendurable, when the strings of life were about to snap-yet you have been brought through. You, in the past year, looked forward and said, 'When I come up to that mountain, I know no what I shall do; I shall never be able to travel over it, or go round it or through it." When you got up to it, you had to say, "Who art tou, oh, thou great moun tain? Befire Zerubbabel thou hast become a pl in." David said, "O day I shall perish," yet he passed through that. There was a time when Elisha thought he should perish, yet he lived to be more illu trious than ever. Jacob said, " All torse things are against me " But the Spirit said, Ah, Jacob, all these things are for you, not against you, an there will be a time when your idumined spirit will see it; how these things have been working out to Go i's glory. There was a time when the di-ciples sail, "Lord we are going down, Lord rave us." But they did not perish. They live, seated on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. They lived to write wonderful books, and we live because they live. So in your history of the year. You looked forward to something which you thought would be death to you still here you are, every

Another question must be answered: Who has been our help? " Thou hast been my help," said the poet monarch. Did he mean Job or Jonathan, or his mother or father, or Absalom, or his friends? David uses the personal; and thank God for the personality. Real the book of Psalms in these days when science is trying to obliterate the personality of God. /Thank God that He is One to whom you can say "Thou."

one, to thank God for His bell ing mercy.

So that this is the first answer we hav-

"Because Thou hast been my help."

h ve head of one who became a most dist ngui-hed philos phical Christian thinker, who had lost at one time all will I rejoice." This is the language of fai h in the Divine personality, but who, trust; but trust expressed in the lanthrough Divine grace, tound it was full | guage of logic, in the languige of poetry, of joy unspeak ble Some of you have in the language of joy. The language of gone very near to that loss, so that you logic, for there is a "therefore" in it. have come very near to the joy of this We ought to act logically, as well as talk discovery. Oh, to think that in the joy logically. How of en we have he word of this un verse, in the movements which "therefore" put in this form in he bo k are spoverwhelming and intricate, there of Psalms. If we have found God to be is no con rolling Person! No one be- strong and wise, ough we not to trust yond man! Oh, to feel ob iged to shut | Him, and give our elves up to His guidoneself up by philosophy, so called, to ance? If we have found God to be that thought! If one of you is now a loving, shall we not therefore abide in Christian that pe son can tell me the jay | His love? Jesus condescended to dopt he felt when he was able to say, "There | the postical language of the Old Testais a Got in the universe." There is no ment when He stoke of the hen and longer the dreary "No." "There is chickens. So God takes care of us. Love; there is a heart that beats in re- And this trust was the lang age of one sponse to my heart; there is a hand that | who was not yet out of trouble; David | there, guarded by Mo-lem tanaticism. to iches my hant; that incomprehensible magnitude; that mysterious per a fugitive; he had no friends about him, sonality that fills all space; the awful and very few comforts He was still in abysses of whose gory are beyond our power to search; whose dazzling white purity mak s the holiest spirits cry, surely, if we live-more anxieties, more 'Holy, boly, holy' He is a man; He is | fears, more great tri is, and vex tions. a Got. I can say to Him, 'Thou art my | What does D vid c ll this troubl ? A God.'" So it was with David, long befo e our cle rlig as. He looked when he wanted light, lot to the place where death was not to the place where state | the words that go before, "I will rememor r va ty w s, no to the place where | ber Thee upon my bed, and meditate on an army wa , but "I will lift up my eyes to the Lills, my nelp cometh from the Lord." Heaven and earth are full of the signs of what God is. Oh, that And then he rises from the shadow he it is second only to Jerusalem in sacred over the sacred spot. Such thoughts travelled every foot of the road by "God i my help ' Only think of that was under to the thought of God's wing. interest to-day. In itself, however, it Think of the landscape, all black with Why, these very troubles, after all, to night, turned into day. Think of all that is meant by t e word God; all the power, all the wistom, all the love of eter ity, al the abi i y of the Almighty be frightened. He is not far away. It -all that turned into help! And, fur- is He who has flung this shadow over ther, it is the language of appropriation, you. There is the child in the cradie, "God is my telp." Let us understand, and a shadow comes over it. Whose us who are Christians, that all through shadow is that? Why, the shadow of looking down upon the valley. Here this very year God sour very own.

The dear delichts we here enjoy. A d fon lly call our own. Are but sho t f v rs borrowed now To be rep i a on.

discuss on of this railew.

the a swer to the second question in the Then the third inquiry comes-How have y u learned this? Why, experi mentall. D vi i was speaking from experience. We can speak from expe rience There are some who still smile at the term 'ex er menta treatise" or "sermon." Why ot smile at the term "experimental enemistry" or "experimental p closop y?" Only an experithrough the perils and providences of m nul Christian is a Christian. "Thou this past year, have turned a deaf and hast been my ... lp " is our experimental dull ear to God, I want you to learn bexperience. We have trusted Christ. fore the year winds up how to si g with and we have f un ! Him our help. For us, "Because T ou hast been my help He is not the help of those who have therefore will I rej ice in the shadow of never tried Him Trie I in all circumstances He i as ben faithful. We can never point to o e single passage in the past ye r's his ory and s y, "Oh, Christ, thou ids fail us ere" We have also experimentally g t to this conclusion t rough our tral of His help through prayer We har a great deal of discussion in the present day about the p i oso hy of prayer. When a man is known to e a praying man he is almost sure to come into contact with some theo: i-t who knows no hing higher than scie ce, and he will s y, "Philosophy -ays the alleg d lower of prayer is impossible. It is impossible for you to say you can set aside the laws of creation with prayer." Who wants to set aside the laws of creation? God can answer my prayer will out touching the constitution of creation. I find things brought into my nature which expect prayer to be answered. I find in the Bible all inducements a d p omises and incitements to encourage obedience to the command to ray without ceasing. "D n't pray until you understand the philosophy of prayer," says the scientist. Common sense refuses to stop prayer until we con understand the philosophy of it. Do not listen to the man who says, " Don't pray until you understand he position of prayer in the counsels of the universe." Last year we tried its and found it answered. Answers to prayer are ascertained facts, and no man with a healthy mind will stop prayer or question its effic cy, whatever the difficulties arising from the philosophy of it. When I know from experience last year that God hears and gives help through prayer, I am not likely to be put aside from praying because some young man tells me that the alleged efficacy of to give when we speak of the review. prayer is inconsistent with the real stability of natural law. Also-and this is the third particular-we know He has been our help from His words and from our trial of His word. I am afraid many Christians are too hurried, even in their Christian work, to get what is really to be had from the Bible. But if you search for God's helping mercy as for

hilden treasure, if you look in the Bible

help from the Bible.

as you look for a lost will, you will get

therefore in the shad w of Thy wings was not at rest yet. Yes; he was o ly the dark, and we are not out of our troubles yet. There are more to come, "shadow." What is it that casts shadow? God's wing. Lack at these words of the tex in connection with Thee in the night wa ches; b cause Toou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice." those who trust, are the very things that show God is remembering you. They are the shadow of His wigs. Do not comfort is very near, strength is very near, when God is near you. David comforts himself that the shadow is from God. Who told you that the night would never But God is eternally our own. This is end? Who told you list year, when you were so low down, that you never would be out of the miry clay? We ought to rejoice we have a God who is a fountain of rejoicing, and at whose right band are pleasures for ever more. We ought to rejoice, and we shall rejo ce, if we have the spirit of God in us, in the shadoweven on the sick bed. This, then, is the substance of what I have to say this morning. I want you all to know the power of these worls. Those who

> Oh make but t ial of His love, Experience will deci e How blest are they, and only they, Who in His tru h confide.

Christmas Eve at Bethlehem.

BY REV. THADDEUS A. SNIVELY.

through Bethlehem on our way to He- ing to this touching metaphor. In the people—as the former with the birth the little lambs or the wearied ewes of Jesus Christ -the coming of God in their bosoms. Behind them came the

The form of Abraham ever rises before the mind when Hebron is mentioned and Hebron and its history are forgotten by thousands who look with profound other. est veneration and love to Bethlehem, where one greater than Abraham, though his offspring and heir, was born.

In entering Hebron we passed the large tree known as Abraham's Oaka very ancient one, twenty-three feet in circumference. It cannot be as old as its name suggests by many, many centuries, but it is the last of the family of Oaks of Mamre, under whose branches

angels were entertained unawares. Hebron lies in "the Valley of Eshcol" rich with vineyards, olive trees and fruits. The attraction of the whole place, however, is that which but few Christian pilgrims are allowed to approach, and none to enter for these seven hundred years past-the Cave of Machpelah. So we hastened to look upon the walls which enclose the precious mystery—the place universally admitted by Jews, Christians and Mussulmen to be the sepulchre of the pa-

The Haram, "the forbidden place," is a building of Jewish origin, standing | cel) of the old Basilica which covers the high above all else, the marked feature | cave is theirs. This church was erected

"Because Thou hast been my help, way in an enthusiasm of interest, in Great, in A. D. 327, and is therefore spite of the darkening faces of the people and the protests of the guides, until It is divided among the Greek, Ameriflying stones convinced us that discretion yet it is very interesting to stand so near a spot made sacred by such memories and devotion-one of the few localities that seem to be beyond question A few favoured ones, such as the Prince sons of the first named, have looked from the floor of the Mosque into the cave itself which was the resting place of Abraham. Per aps even the ashes of Christian love and Jewish pride alike look to this place as one of the most sacred in the world's history.

> The road from Hebron to Bethlehem passes the Pools of Solomon, which were part of the system of supplying the Temple with pure water. An aqueduct from them tollows the road to Jerusalem and ends in the Temple enclosure.

> We reached Bethlehem early in the afternoon of the day be ore Christmas. What a flood of thoughts comes over us we enter this place! Though so small. "lit leamong the thousands of Judah," yet is a charming spot. It is situated on an elevation, quite narrow, running down in terraces to the valley beneath. These slopes are covered with rich fruits and vegetation. And above all the mass of buildings known as the Church of the Nativity stands isolated the Idyl of Ruth, and David's shepherd life carried him everywhere over these hills and dales.

But thoughts of other shepherds come to us, and we hasten through the vil lage to the plain where "shepherds watched their flocks by night." Trathe story. It is a simple, uncared-for eastern pasturage, yet how sacred to the heart of the Christian world. In this cave the shepherds are supposed to have been warching, and near it is the village in which they are supposed to have lived. The plain as we saw it again in the moonlight harmonized sweetly with our dreams of that wonderous night.

It seems a fitting thought that the Lumb of God, who was to be the Good Shepherd of souls, should have first been announced to humble watchers in the valley guarding their helpless Two days before Christmas we passed | ture of eastern life that gave new mean master's slightest word or look. They will toward men" were made up, also, both of sheep and goats, easily separated and sometimes necessarily divided the one from the

From the plain we hurried back to see the place of our Saviour's nativity before darkness came on, with the celebration of Christmas eve. The cave, which is supposed to have been the stable of the old caravansary or khan, is now hidden fro n sight by the massive church. One can see nothing of the manger even, as it is covered with cloth and marble and lamps. Christian superstition has concealed the first great thought under degrading and lowering associations. Just beside the shrine is shown the place where stood the mangercradle, at whose side eastern wise men supplied by a marble trough, and tradition points to the real manger as being in Rome, a belief which may well be questioned. The whole ground and all the surroundings are carefully measured off, each sect coming in for a separate portion. The grotto itself is common to all, though the Greeks seem to have the best of it, as the apse (the chan-

the oldest Christian church in the world. waged for a few inches of wall, and that Europe in war.

But, in spite of all these drawbacks, one cannot but absorb the spirit and enthusiasm of St. Jerome, whose study is one of the precious spots under the Latin control. Here that illustrious saint and student lived and worked and died showing in his consecrated life the power and influence that came to men in that Divine Birth, which consecrates the whole place.

The memories, the history, the sacred | guide because he was a native of the associations, lead one to forget the sad desert and had traveled all over it. His exhibition of human nature and religi- experience was his qualification. We ous bitterness which are entrenched have a brother who has Himself are needed indeed. We attended the which we have to go, and His footsteps midnight service at the Latin Church, have marked out with blood a track for which was a mere travesty of Christian | us to follow, and have trodden a footworship, utterly unworthy of the church whose ceremonials can be made so grand He knows "how to encamp in this and impressive. It seemed so unfitting to hear a cracked-voice organ playing ernacled among us,' and by experience airs from Offenbach operas during the has learned the weariness of the journey service in celebration of the Saviour's its mother. Thu, love is very near, is the scene of the sacred story of the bir h; but all else was likewise sadly Saviour's birth. Here was enacted unsuited and inharmonious. Yet it ing orders are brief and simple; was indeed an impressive moment - a privilege to be there in Bethlehem, in his footprints. and to kneel on the eve of Christmas at the shrine made sacred by that Marvelous Gift.

It gave intense reality to the Gospel story in all its humility, as well as its dition leads us to a little grotto which grandeur. The new born Babe lay is guarded by the Greek Christiaas. there in its weakness upon that first and is probably the site of the angel Christmas eve, but now a world is visitants. Nothing is there to mark moved by that power, and untold and measureless millions have knelt hom ge and obedience at his feet.

We went back to our camp singing carols and hyms of Christmas joy, making the little village ring with words so the great fact that gave that little town an everlasting fame.

The cents were pitched by the Well of David for whose sweet waters his devoted tollowers had risked their lives; but here in the house of David a greater Fountain had been opened for sin and us by his own unseen Spirit within and uncleanness. All was brilliant in that brightness of an eastern night. Below charge. When we passed over this us lay the plain of the shepherds in full same plain before, we had seen a pic- light, sil-nt and peaceful as of yore-Above, the heavens were studded with numberless stars, that each seemed to bron. The latter is as closely as-ociated distance, twice had flocks and shepherds stand over where the young Child lay. with the beginnings of the revela ion been seen; but in each case the shep. And out of the clear sky we could alof God's truth to a nation—a peculiar herds had come first, carefully bearing most hear the voices of the angelic hosts as they chanted the good tidings of great joy for all people, "Glory to God human form—the Revelation to all the flocks, so gently led, tollowing their in the highest, and on earth peace, good-

"Such music (as 'tis said) Before was never made,

But when of old the sons of morning sung While the Creator great His constellations set, And the well-balanced world on hinges

And cast the dark foundations deep, And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel keep. "Ring out, ye crystal spheres, Once bless our human ears, If ye have power to touch our senses so

And let your silvery chime

Move in melodious time; And let the bass of Heaven's deep organ And with your nine-fold harmony, Make up full consort to the angelic sym-

CHRISTMAS.-When Irving was reproached for describing an English Christmas which he had never seen, he replied that, although everything that once knelt in homage. Its place is now he had described might not be seen at any single house, yet all of it could be seen somewhere in England at Christmas. He might have answered, also, that the spirit of what he had described, was visible everywhere in Christendom on Christmas-day.

'Some say that ever 'gainst that season Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated, The bird of dawning singeth all night long; And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad; The nights are wholesome, then no planets

No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to Now a few words on the resolve. of Hebron. We hurried up the steep by Helen, the mother of Constantine the So hallow'd and so gracious is the time."

This is the Christmas sentiment of to-day, as it was of Shakespeare's time. It is the most human and kindly of can and Latin (Roman) Catholics, each seasons, as fully penetrated and irradiwas the course of wisdom. On'y the jea'ously watching for any encroach- ated with the feeling of human brotheroutside can be seen by ordinary mortal; ment of the other and ready to resist | hood, which is the essential spirit of even unto blood. The whole visit is Christianity, as the month of June with saddened by the presence of the Turk- sunshine and the balmy breath of roses, ish guard, who are there to keep the Santa Claus coming down the chimney Christian fanatics from tearing each loaded with gifts is but the symbol of o her to pieces. Each of the three the gracious influence which at this of Wales, the Marquis of Bute, Crown bodies have a portion of the church time descends from heaven into every Prince of Prussia, and later the young. above, and have their own approach to heart. The day dawns with a benedicthe shrine, which is beneath. It is said | tion; it passes in holiday happiness; that many bitter contests have been and ends in soft and pensive regret. It could not be the most beautiful of festithe question of the opening and shutting | vals if it were doctrinal, or dogmatic, or patriarch and mother in Israel are still of the doors has well nigh involved theological, or local. It is a universal holiday because it is the jubilee of a universal sentiment, moulded only by a new epoch, and subtly adapted to newer forms o' the old faith .- Harper's Magazine, December.

Thoughts for the Closing Year,

BY REV. A. MACLAREN. D. D.

Moses sought to secure Hobab for a path through the else pathless waste. wilderness,' for He Himselt has 'taband the perils of the wilderses.

His life is our pattern. Our marchfollow your leader and plant your feet

This is the sum of all ethics, and the vade mecum for practical life. However diverse our duties and circumstances are, the principles which come out in the Divine record of that fair life and wondrous death will fit with equal closeness to ps all; and so Divine that all comprehensive is it that it abides as the sufficient pattern for every class, for every stage, for every variety of character, for every era, and every land, till the end.

Our poor, weak hearts long for a brother's hand to hold us up, for a strange to them, yet praising God for brother's voice to whisper a word of cheer, for a brother's example to animate as well as to instruct. An abstract law of right is but a cold guide, like the stars that shine keen in the polar winter. It is hard even to find in the bare thought of an unseen God guiding His unseen providence without, the solidity and warmth which we need. Therefore we have mercifully received God manifest in the flesh, a brother to be our Guide and the Captain of our

To Him, then, transfer all those feelings of confidence and affection too often lavished on men. The noblest use for the precious ointment of love, which the poorest of us bears in the alabaster box of the heart, is to break it on Hs head.

Thus loving and following him we shall be set free from undue dependence on human helpers whilst they are with us, from eagerness to secure them, from dread of losing them, from despair when they depart. Perplexities will disappear. Duty will become plain. Life will not be a weary march through an unknown land where we have to choose our path by our own poor wisdom, and death is often the penalty of a blunder. All our duty and joy lie in the one command, ' Follow Me, and if we only ask Him to be with us 'instead of eyes,' and accept His gentle leading, we shall not walk in darkness, but may plunge into thickest night and the most unknown land, assured that He will ' lead us by a right way to the city of habitation.'

The New Year.

Another year is dawning! Dear Master, let is be. In working or in waiting, Another year with Thee.

Another year of progress, Another year of praise; Another year of proving Thy presence "all the days."

Another year is dawning! Dear Master, let it be, On earth, or else in heaven, Another year for Thee. -Frances R. Havergal.

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