

## "Every Year."

"You are growing old," they tell us  
Every year;  
"You are more alone," they tell us  
Every year;  
"You can win no new affection,  
You have only recollection,  
Deeper sorrow and dejection,  
Every year."  
"There come new cares and sorrows  
Every year;  
Darker days and darker sorrows  
Every year.  
The ghosts of dead loves haunt us,  
The ghosts of changed friends' taunt us,  
And disappointments daunt us  
Every year."  
"Too true! Life's shores are shifting  
Every year;  
And we are seaward drifting  
Every year;  
Old places, changing, fret us,  
The living more forget us,  
There are fewer to regret us  
Every year."  
"But the truer life draws nigher  
Every year;  
And its Morning Star climbs higher  
Every year.  
Earth's hold on us grows slighter,  
And the heavy burthen lighter,  
And the Dawn is mortal brighter,  
Every year."

## The Call Forward.

A THOUGHT FOR NEW YEAR, BY REV.  
NEWMAN HALL, D. D.

We have reached the end of a long stage in the journey of life, and the New Year bids us again to gird up our loins and "go forward." In front spreads the great ocean of time with its unknown depths, its unseen shores, its possible perils, its awful powers of storm, its hopes of pleasant breezes and a prosperous voyage. Some of us have spent the past year with so much enjoyment that we would fain detain it or repeat it, dreading the possibilities of change. Others again have encountered such adverse weather and endured such fatigue that they are hoping that in every sense the renewed journey shall verify the frequent greeting and prayer for a "Happy New Year." But whether we shun or hail the onward journey, we have no alternative. We cannot retrace our steps, nor remain where we are. We must advance. Whatever the nature of our voyage may prove to be across that uncertain sea, where clouds often hide the sun and threaten storms, we must needs "go forward." The only true cure of care on setting out afresh is faith in God as our "refuge and strength," our guide, protector, father. It matters not whether we know all that may happen, if he who knows all holds our hand, directs our passage, and says, "Fear not, for I am with thee." To trust his word, to lean on his hand, to do his will, whatever our difficulties, toils or sorrows may be—such filial trust will ensure a "happy New Year."

The children of Israel had been rescued from Egypt, and were led by the pillar of cloud toward the shore of the Red Sea. Pharaoh, with chariots and horses, in full pursuit, hung on their rear. Whither shall they flee? The command was given, "Go forward!" But there were no transport vessels to convey them; the way was too deep for fording, too wide for swimming, and what would become of the women and children, and the aged? "Go forward" was the command. It seemed impossible, but as they obeyed, a wide road opened before the advancing host, the waters standing in heaps on either side. Faith was required to advance along so strange a path. Science taught that all liquids seek their own level, and therefore those waters must return, and at any moment might overwhelm the passengers. Experience had never known such a prodigy, and was against the seeming folly of such a risk. There were some who murmured against losses for guiding them into such a perilous trap. Others lamented having left Egypt at all, with its abundance of food, and safety from the perils and toils of the wilderness. Many might have desired to retreat, make submission to Pharaoh and return. But obedience and faith prevailed. Would not the same God who had broken their bonds, guide them safely to the inheritance he had promised? Could not the Creator who made the sea, make and keep a way through it? The people might tremble as they saw the mountain masses lift up their indignant crests in furious foam, with a deafening roar, but would not the God who had bade those waters rise up, keep them up and hold them back till his flock had passed over?

God's Israel of to-day stands on the shore of a new year and many fear as they face the unknown and untrodden region they must needs cross. Do yonder distant clouds betoken refreshing, fertilizing showers, or sickness, poverty, anxiety, bereavement, death?

Can I venture into a path strange and perilous? The law of life compels me to go forward. But does not the law of faith invite me, encourage me, constrain me to go forward? Will not he who ordains the journey prepare the road? Will not he who makes the road guard me, and provide for all his children who travel by it?

He has called us out of Egypt—from its bondage, its sorrows, its vices, its idolatries, and he bids us go forward with freedom and joy. Forward, then, leaving behind every besetting sin, evil habits, bad companionships, secret faults, vice, intemperance of every kind, pride, selfishness, worldliness, the abominable idolatries which place anything between our hearts and God. It is impossible to go forward with safety or peace if we burden ourselves with the worthless but weighty rubbish of the world. Let us with the New Year "Lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus." Let us "put away the deeds of darkness and put on the whole armor of light."

"Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring happy bells, across the snow.  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true."

Perhaps some reader may be sincerely anxious to do this—to amend what has been wrong and to do whatever is right, but may be oppressed with a sense of guilt and weakness. Our Joshua and Saviour says, "Come unto me!" Go forward to him in repentance, confessing and renouncing your sin, and he will bestow free pardon through the sacrifice of himself, and give you the help of his Holy Spirit to enable you to do what is beyond your unaided strength. Then, delivered from the burden of guilt, and renewed in heart, you will be able to go forward, following him in daily obedience and holy service.

In such obedience we must often trust where we cannot trace. There are mysteries in the natural world beyond our comprehension, but on which we confidently and successfully act. If we do not understand fully our own complex being of body and mind, and yet are diligent in performing the duties and meeting the needs of our nature, we can obey the clear commands and rely on the plain promises of God without first finding out God unto perfection. We can enjoy the fragrance of flowers and the glory of the heavens without understanding the sciences of botany and astronomy. So we can accept plain facts and obey plain commands without being able to explain all the mysteries of the divine will. We may humbly and cheerfully be resigned to sorrow, and struggle to perform difficulties, though unable to understand why God should have ordained them. But by perseverance in duty we shall increase in our assurance of his reasonableness. The duty of to-day is what we know to-day, and by performing it we reach to-morrow and the knowledge of to-morrow.

Climbing our Welsh mountain Snowden, I one day scaled some precipitous rocks called "Crybyddkil," i. e., "edge of the plate," because on each side of the narrow ridge was a sheer precipice of several hundred feet. A thick fog came on which hid from view everything but ourselves and the bit of knife-edge on which we straddled. We knew that the ridge led direct to the summit, which we should reach if we went "forward." We could see two yards beyond us, but not an inch further. This was enough for the very next advance, when a further similar glimpse was revealed. So by creeping along the first few inches, we saw the next few hitherto hidden. So, as the Scripture says, "If ye do his will, ye shall know of the doctrine." "Follow on to know the Lord."

Progress in duty is progress in knowledge. Faith grows stronger by exercise. The healthy life of a tree is proved by the growth it causes.

The Church of Christ only triumphs by advancing. Some professed leaders of the army give the word, "As you were," and others, "Stand at ease," and the enemy says "Retreat"—but Christ says, "Go forward."

God never issues a command without making obedience possible. Every precept contains a promise. Christ teaches to ask food for the present "day by day," so he commands us to go forward from where we are to-day, and therefore we shall always be advancing. As food for to-morrow will be given to-morrow, so strength for duty. Whatever the difficulty of advance, he says, "My grace is sufficient for thee." How dare we hesitate because of probable difficulties? If the duty is clear to conscience, what business have we to ask, "Will it damage my property, trade, reputation, social position, health or life?" Such

questions are not asked of the commander of an army by any of his officers or men. Our question should solely be this, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Let us then, this new year, more than before, obey his supreme command—"Go forward." Difficulties that appal us in the distance, will applaud us as we pass. Circumstances, the tyrants of the timid, become servants to the brave. Foes hush their threatenings as they hear the defiant tread of those who are determined to go forward. Outjuggling crags and tangled roots that forbade ascent to the mountain top shall be hands outstretched to aid us in our climb. It is the easiest path whatever its difficulties, it is the shortest path, it is the only path to salvation, to go forward. It saves a thousand anxious questionings, fears and delays. What! up those mountains? They shall become plains. Across those abysses? They shall be filled up. Between those roaring lions? You shall find them chained. The Red Sea of danger shall become the highway of triumph—its heaving waves the guards, their foaming crests the pennants, their angry roar the music of our march! Say to the children of our Israel—say to the young men and women—say to all who have volunteered to follow the Captain of our Salvation.—Go Forward!

## Revival Leadership.

In the recent revival number of "The Epworth Herald," Bishop Mallalieu sounds a clarion call to pastors which cannot fail to stir the heart. He says:

"The man behind the gun. Yes, but how about the man who is behind the man who is behind the gun?"

"The secret of success in the movement of aggregations of individuals is leadership. A good army with poor leadership is never equal to an inferior army with good leadership. Grant was worth more than fifty thousand men when he set out on the Wilderness campaign. Napoleon was more to France for almost a score of years—stormy, bloody, desperate years—than any fifty thousand soldiers of all the mighty armies under his command."

"When will we learn that it is for the pastor to be the leader of his church in all good things, and especially in revivals? If ever God's people find the still waters and the green pastures; if ever they find a table spread with abundant supplies even in the presence of enemies, it will be when the pastors recognize and perform the duties which properly belong to them. It is the abdication of a divinely appointed responsibility when a pastor spends time, strength and money in trying to secure the services of an evangelist to do the work which he ought to do himself. It is almost the same thing when the pastor depends upon the labors of our deaconesses to do what every pastor ought to do in the way of personal and persistent visitation of his people; and every pastor, especially, ought to search out and care for the poor and the neglected. It is far from my thought to decry either evangelists or deaconesses, but most pastors must do without either, for there are not enough to go around, and even now, if it should be found that an evangelist was one for revenue only, he should be shunned as a plague spot on the religious life of any community."

"The pastor ought to be his own evangelist. Have we not learned that this is not a time in the history of Christianity when a Peter the Hermit—with his Deus vult—can rouse the nations and collect followers by the million to follow the cross-embazoned banner on a crusade to rescue an empty tomb from the hand of the infidel? There are not a dozen men in Protestantism who, without helpful accessories, can command vast congregations, and lead men by scores and by hundreds to renounce their sins and commence a truly religious life. The only way left to us of these modern times is to do our very best in the pulpit, and then, with a diligence that never fails, a patience that never falters, and a faith that never yields to any difficulty, and a love that is pure and deathless, go from house to house, and from home to home, and from heart to heart, and tearfully plead with sinful souls to turn from the paths of death and accept Christ as their sufficient and sin-pardoning Saviour."

My brother pastor, if I could speak to your soul and heart and conscience I would say, by the help of God get ready for the discharge of these two all-important duties. Do you ask me how? I say by an immediate sear of honest heart-searching, followed by complete irrevocable, honest consecration, and this followed by the prayers of faith, faith that will claim all the promises of God that have relation to your personal needs—

faith that dares to believe for an instantaneous, complete, uttermost, glorious salvation. Brother, would you dare to go into your own church, open the pulpit Bible at some of the all-inclusive promises, and there alone, all doors locked, no witness at the solemn scene—would you dare to kneel down on the very spot where you are to stand when you preach to the people, and give yourself up fully to God, and sincerely and truly ask God to strip you of anything and everything that hinders you; and then ask him to give you the Holy Ghost for cleansing and for endowment of power? Would you dare to look God in the face and say, For this blessed grace I will lay all on the altar—time, talents, friends, reputation, preferment, honor, fame, ease, pleasure, emolument—all there is of life, all there is of hope or fear, and in one all-embracing sentence say: "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord? Would you dare to do all that, and then steadfastly wait for an hour or two, fasting, praying, groaning after all God has for you until you are sensibly filled with all the fullness of God?"

## "God Giveth the Increase."

Faithful preachers of the Gospel of the grace of God cannot possibly know the great things effected through their ministry. A single sermon may accomplish a revolution in the life of a hearer through which blessing will accrue to countless generations. Possibly Dr. Lyman Beecher finished his pulpit work that Sunday morning with a feeling of discouragement. Certainly he did not of himself know that a deathless spirit, listening to his words had been quickened into life, and had received the Spirit of the glorified Saviour into her heart. Apart from the joyous fact that it was his own precious child who announced her surrender to Jesus, it must have been a wondrous satisfaction to the servant of God to be informed that his sermon had borne fruit in the conversion of a soul, although he may have had no thought of the grand work the new disciple should be the instrument of accomplishing in the world. In "Life and Letters" we have another striking illustration of what the conversion of a girl may mean to the Church and to the world.

"I met at Dayton," says Mrs. Stowe, "a woman who now has grandchildren, but who, when I first came West, was a gay, rattling girl. She was one of the first converts of my brother George's seemingly obscure ministry in the little new town of Chillicothe. Now she has one son who is a judge of the Supreme Court, and another in prosperous business. Both she and they are Christians of the primitive sort, whose religion is their all: 'who glory in tribulation,' knowing that it 'worketh patience.' She told me, with a bright, sweet calm of her husband killed in battle the first year of the war, of her only daughter and two grandchildren dying in the faith, and of her own happy waiting on God's will, in hope of a joyful reunion. Her sons are leading members of the Presbyterian Church, and active in stirring up others to make the Christian profession a reality. When I thought that all this came from the conversion of one giddy girl, when George seemed to be doing so little, I said, 'Who can measure the work of a faithful minister?'"—Indian Witness.

## Blessings in Disguise.

We do not always know what is for our own good. Things which seem to be evil work together for our good. When Jacob in his old age mourned the loss of his son, he said, "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away; all these things are against me" (Gen. 45: 20). And yet these things which he thought were against him were the workings of Divine Providence on his behalf, and it was by these very things that God was pleased to deliver Jacob and his house from famine and from death. So the shades which seem to us to hang darkest may but precede the brightest day. The weeping which endures but for a night prepares us for the singing which comes in the morning. (Ps. 30: 5, margin.) The assaults of enemies, which vex and grieve our souls, only prepare us for the day of peace and blessing, when conflicts and trials shall be over. Let us learn to watch and wait, and see what purposes of mercy God has for us even in hours of darkness and distress.

It is said that at the siege of Sebastopol a cannon ball, missing its aim, struck in the side of a neighboring mountain, and from the fissure made by it gushed a stream of crystal water. The instrument of death opened a life-sustaining fountain. So the missile

of our foes may open to us streams of blessing.

It is through the fiery furnace and the lion's den that men come to victory, triumph, and peace. Let us fear not to go forward. The Red Sea shall divide before us, but it shall close over the enemies of God; and he who has delivered his people in ages past will not forget us in the dark and trying hour.—The Christian.

## Overcoming.

We are either victors or captives. Life is a struggle. If we enter the kingdom of heaven at all, we enter through much tribulation. If it does not come through outward trials, it does come in the inner life of the soul. No Christian life is vigorous without conflict. To float with the stream is not to float toward deep experience, but toward the shallows. If we are making real progress, the enemy will put in our way many hindrances; if he does not, there is good reason to think he sees nothing to fear for his kingdom from us. It is the staunch fighter that he resists.

The overcoming of every-day trifles leads up to the strength for greater victories. No one who is appalled by common tasks or conquered by small worries is fitted for great responsibilities. Our daily life, in the home, in business, in association with fellow-workers, is our school of discipline. It is the gymnasium for the development of spiritual athletes. The blessed Book does not say he that has an easy time and gets through life with the least trouble shall inherit all things. But it does say, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I have overcome, and am set down with my Father on his throne." We think we have much to hinder, and a hard fight day by day; but the conflict is good for us. We could never be crowned as victors if we never had to meet the enemy.—The Christian Advocate.

## Duty, Not Feeling.

Feeling is a poor guide of conduct. A large share of our duty is the doing of what we do not feel like doing, and the not doing that which we do feel like doing. If a boy or a man is set to a task within his ability it is no excuse for his failure to do it that he did not feel like doing it. No court would acquit a prisoner of guilt on the ground that he felt like stalling. President Porter of Yale, said that the greatest gain of a college course is in teaching a student to do what he ought to do, when he ought to do it, whether he wants to do it or not. A man may at times write well, or preach well, or sing well, or perform well on a musical instrument, or fight well in the hour of battle, while he feels like it; but most men have to do those things when they do not feel like it. The world's best work is done by those who are not at the time under the influence of impelling and controlling feeling in that direction. If you feel like doing a thing, or like not doing it, consider whether you ought to do it, or ought not to do it, in spite of your feeling, and then be guided by your duty rather than by your feeling. It may be to your discredit that you cannot feel like doing what you ought to do, but it is never an excuse for your not doing—Baptist Union.

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