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THE NEW YEAR.

AMID the good wishes and congratulations which long usage has rendered peculiarly appropriate for this season of the year, our prayer as editor and pastor, for our readers and parishioners, is that of the apostle for the Thessalonians: **THE LORD BE WITH YOU ALL.** We recognize in this fervent wish, the affectionate, great soul of Paul, whose heart's desire and prayer to God was that all Israel, and even all heathendom might be saved.

OUR FIRST thought on awakening to the consciousness that a new year is upon us, is one of Gratitude to the Almighty for the manifold blessings of the past. O how manifold has the Goodness of God been to us. Oh that men would praise the Lord, for all his goodness to the children of men! We on this coast have been particularly blest during the past year. Peace, plenty, and prosperity, are our heritage from the Lord.

A SECOND thought is that time is short. Whatever we have to do must be done quickly. The night of death will soon come, when no man can work. Will it overtake us this year? If so, as well as because of the greatness of the work we are engaged in, let us strive to be diligent, and to walk humbly before our God. Oh that the light of a coming eternity may shine upon our pathway, and that we may have grace to live as in view of the judgment seat of Jesus Christ.

THIRDLY, how paltry, how unbecoming, how utterly insignificant

Sabbath, January 13th—Thanksgiving for past revivals ; the enforcement of the responsibility resting on every Christian to aid in making known the Lord Jesus, at home and abroad. Missionary services.

THE LESSON OF THE CLOSING YEAR.

BY REV. GEO. BURROWES, D. D.

THE closing year with its faded leaf and lonely desolation, spreads before us an instructive lesson if read with an understanding heart. When Thomson says of God,—“The rolling year is full of Thee,” we may add that the rolling year is full of that truth which leads man to wisdom and to God. Nature and revelation are portions of the one great Volume which unfolds on its variegated pages of light and glory the character of the Almighty Creator. We may say, the truths of revelation and of nature form pages like the illuminated volumes of the dark ages, wherein great skill and labor were bestowed in filling the margin with devices and emblems of various coloring and forms, illustrating and harmonizing with the text ; and in the rich scroll which the hand of God the Creator has unrolled before us, written full, not of lamentations, and mourning, and woe, but of the words of eternal life—the sacred Scriptures are the text, and the various beauties of creation—spring, with its landscape of flowers ; summer, with its golden harvests ; the mellow shades and fading hues of autumn ; winter, with its gloomy desolation ; the wavy margin of the deep blue ocean ; the clouds that gather round the setting sun ; the constellations of the evening sky ;—all, all are but the illuminated embellishments of this volume of revealed truth, gathering new beauty and instructiveness around every word and every letter, beyond all power of imitation by human genius and human skill. Nature without revelation, presents a more pitiable blank than those illuminated manuscripts with all the embellishments left but the writing withdrawn. It is often remarked, that doubtless every weed, however noxious, contains medicinal properties, could they be known. We may feel that every created thing, every circumstance, has embodied in it by the Creator some important truth, could it only be discovered. Enlargement of our powers of vision by the microscope enables us to see exquisite beauties in things so trifling as to be overlooked by the unaided eye ; an increase in our

powers of spiritual "apprehension would cause us to see truth in things now neglected, and love in dealings now viewed with pain ; to see that not only the decay of nature, but that adversity, with its woes,

"Though like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in its head ;
Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

God has himself revealed to us the lesson written on the fading year.

The beauty and vigor of man decay. What is more fading than the beauty which the world so much covet and admire ! The youth Narcissus of the ancient fable, enamored with his own charms, tired not with the contemplation of himself in the clear waters of a fountain, and pined away as he gazed. The reality of this is everywhere visible. And this strange weakness does not depend on the possession of beauty. Never was there a form, however ugly, which did not think itself beautiful ; never a mind so weak, a soul so mean, as not to be proud of some imaginary endowment. Multitudes who would blush to acknowledge it, live in the constant cultivation of this self-love and self-worship, never tired with contemplating their own form in a glass, using every means art and wealth can furnish to heighten their charms, to conceal their blemishes, and to draw around them worshippers at this shrine of their own idolatry — self — who may offer there the incense of flattery and praise. What sums are squandered in this pitiable folly. In the very gratification of this pride, its freshness is fading away. The young person who now prides himself or herself on being the centre of all eyes, sacrificing thousands to dress and fashion, nothing for benevolence and piety, shall soon, even if life is spared, find the paleness of age on the cheek, and its furrows on the brow ; and even the good looks of which she is so vain, are beginning, in the very spring-time of life, to fade as a leaf. "Verily, every man, at his best state, is altogether vanity. Selah. Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth. They dwell in houses of clay ; their foundation is in the dust ; they are crushed before the moth. Thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away."

Our prospects fade like the leaf. In youth our sanguine feelings and the flattery of self-love people the future with bright creations, and lead us to feel that the disquietudes of the present will be left with the past, that the discomforts of youth will be lost amid the pleasures of manhood, that the distractions of middle life will be

forgotten in the tranquillity of a retired old age; nothing but happiness enters into our calculation, and our life is to be one from which the ordinary ills of humanity are to be excluded. One of the lessons we have to learn is, that these prospects are deceptive. They too, like everything earthly, do fade as the leaf. "Come now, ye that say, to-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." *Jas.* iv, 14. The success you expect in business may prove but disaster; your anticipated wealth may be set aside by bankruptcy; health, now the most robust, may unexpectedly fail; friends fall around you as the fading summer leaf; the husband of your love, the wife of your bosom, from whose affection you are expecting so much happiness, may prove your greatest earthly sorrow, and your heaviest earthly scourge; the children by whom you are hoping old age to be made happy, may bring down your gray hairs in sorrow to the grave; your son of brightest promise may live long enough to raise your expectations and blast them by death on the threshold of a promising manhood; your purposes of repentance will be lost amid the temptations and business of coming years, and your deathbed be a deathbed of gloom; ere the spring of youth is closed, "your way of life may be fallen into the sear and yellow leaf;" and your career, now opening bright as the cloudless summer morning, will close in hopeless impenitence, under the displeasure of heaven, like the sun of that day of promise, going down amid clouds, and tempests, and lightning, and thunder, and gloom.

Our pleasures fade as the leaf. In the first freshness of enjoyment there is a lively delight in earthly pleasures; but soon they begin to satiate, and we find at last that the same principle of decay pervades them all. While the trees of earthly enjoyment, in such various kinds, are scattered along our way with fruits so tempting in the distance, they are no sooner plucked than they begin to wither, and lose their freshness before they reach our lips. Has anything heretofore desired met your expectations? Never yet have you found at any party, on any card-table, at any ball, at any opera, in any theatre, at any fashionable gathering, in the splendor of any magnificent dress, in any promenade among the showy and the gay, that for which you were seeking. All these things, like the sensitive plant, withered at your approach, were found faded in your grasp; and you turned from them with wonder and sadness at your disappointment.

In later life, often before middle-life, the man of pleasure, the devotee of fashion, the youth who has courted dissipation, the female whose life has been exhausted in studying to set off her charms and win admirers, find themselves with those old desires made rigid and insatiable by habit, and the means of pleasure from their gratification proportionally abated; the powers blunted by over-gratification, cease to receive their indulgence with so high a zest; and around, valueless and almost unheeded, faded pleasures are gathering and falling like withered leaves. We stand on the shady bank of a stream as the yellow leaves are falling on its waters, placid beneath the rich sunlight of an autumn sky, and see them float noiselessly away; so do our faded pleasures fall around us on the stream of time, and are soon borne beyond the reach of memory to sink in the ocean of oblivion.

Our mental powers do fade as the leaf. A life of impenitence is a continual wasting away of the spiritual powers of man. The intellectual faculties may often burn with great brilliancy, but in the absence of the fear of God this very vigor gives a beauty like the hectic flush on the cheek of the consumptive, consuming the vitality of the system while exciting the admiration of those around. Education and culture may counteract, to some extent, this decay; but the seeds of death are there; even if the man do not waste away his powers prematurely by the corroding effects of dissipation, he will find them failing under the withering blight of sickness, or the gathering frosts of age. And when we look at cases like the greatest of English statesmen, William Pitt, a wreck in the prime of manhood; or Robert Hall, with his magnificent mind and matchless eloquence, a maniac in the vigor of his days; or Robert Southey, standing in the proudest position among literary men, with the mind that had charmed nations, sinking into the imbecility of a second childhood, we are made to feel that even in the possession of the highest intellectual powers, there is nothing beyond the reach of decay; for even these do fade as a leaf.

And what on earth does not wither and decay? Its pomp and power, its kingdoms and crowns, its pyramids and palaces, its noble cities with their gates of brass, its trophies and mausoleums of kingly marble, all, all fading and crumbling to dust.

“ All flesh is grass, and all its glory fades,
Like the fair flower dishevel'd in the wind;
Riches have wings, and grandeur is a dream;
The man we celebrate must find a tomb,

And we that worship him, ignoble graves.
 Nothing is proof against the general curse
 Of vanity, that seizes all below.
 The only amaranthine flower on earth
 Is virtue, the only lasting treasure, truth.
 But what is truth?"

The son of God, the eternal Word, Jesus of Nazareth, says, "I am the way and the truth." Among the hills and valleys of our earth, filled with ruins and death, that voice is still moving in animating reverberations which was first heard over the grave of Lazarus, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." In this day there is a fountain opened—to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem only?—nay, to the whole world—for sin and for uncleanness. And from heaven the invitation comes—and they are the last words that heaven has spoken to earth, or that heaven will speak to earth before the judgment—"Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." *Rev.* xxii: 17. "And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 *John* i: 7. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." *Isa.* i: 18. Here, your fading beauty may be restored; here, your wasting vigor renewed. While the weary invalid betakes himself to the waters of some celebrated medicinal spring, or to the reviving air of the summer ocean and the refreshing plunge of its cooling waves, the fainting soul, burdened with guilt, comes here, to a fountain of power more healing than Siloa's brook or Bethseda's pool, and rises with his whole spiritual nature renewed, in a freshness of beauty beyond that of Naaman at the waters of Jordan, from his baptism in the waves of that ocean of love and grace, and heavenly breezes of the Holy Spirit, to which Jesus has opened a new and living way. Here at the foot of the cross has burst forth the fountain seen by Ezekiel only in prophetic symbols, whose waters have swollen into a river, on either side of which grow trees "whose leaf shall not fade,"—whose influence makes the wilderness to rejoice and blossom as the rose,—and sheds on the cold, pale cheek of death the freshness of angelic youth and unfading bloom. Here, amid the faded beauty and wide-spread ruins of the closing year, at the grave of the risen Jesus,—

"See truth, love, and mercy in triumph descending,
 And nature all glowing in Eden's first bloom;
 On the cold cheek of death smiles and roses are blending,
 And beauty immortal awakes from the tomb."