

A New Year's benediction

“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.” 1 Peter 5: 10

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING: Revelation 21: 1-6

Oh, beloved, when you hear of Christ, when you know that this grace comes through Christ, and the calling through Christ, and the glory through Christ, then you say, “Lord, I can believe it now, if it is through Christ.” It is not a hard thing to believe that Christ’s blood was sufficient to purchase every blessing for me. If I go to God’s treasury without Christ, I am afraid to ask for anything, but when Christ is with me I can then ask for everything. For sure I think he deserves it, though I do not. If I can claim his merits then I am not afraid to plead. Is perfection too great a boon for God to give to Christ? No. Is the keeping, the stability, the preservation of the blood-bought ones too great a reward for the terrible agonies and sufferings of the Saviour? No. Then we may with confidence plead, because everything comes through Christ. I would in concluding make this remark. I wish, my brothers and sisters, that during this year you may live nearer to Christ than you have ever done before. Depend upon it, it is when we think much of Christ that we think little of ourselves, little of our troubles, and little of the doubts and fears that surround us. Begin from this day, and may God help you. Never let a single day pass over your head without a visit to the garden of Gethsemane, and the cross of Calvary. And as for some of you who are not saved, and know not the Redeemer, I would to God that this very day you would come to Christ.

FOR MEDITATION: The New Year may not always be as “Happy” as we would wish, but the Christian is blessed in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Ephesians 1: 3) and can look forward to a “Blessed New Year” throughout the problems that may come.

Faith in perfection

“The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.”

Psalm 138: 8

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING: Deuteronomy 31: 1-8

There is yet another confession in the text—the Psalmist’s confession that all he has, he has from God. “Forsake not the works of thine own hands.” I will not, however, dwell upon it, but urge you who are believers to go home and cry aloud to God in prayer. Let this be a New Year’s day prayer. “Forsake not the work of thine hands. Father, forsake not thy little child, lest he die by the hand of the enemy. Shepherd, forsake not thy lamb, lest the wolves devour him. Great husbandman, forsake not thy little plant, lest the frost should nip it, and it should be destroyed. Forsake me not, O Lord now, and when I am old and grey headed, O Lord, forsake me not. Forsake me not in my joys, lest I curse God. Forsake me not in my sorrows, lest I murmur against him. Forsake me not in the day of my repentance, lest I lose the hope of pardon, and fall into despair; and forsake me not in the day of my strongest faith, lest my faith degenerate into presumption, and so I perish by my own hand.” Cry out to God, that he would not forsake you in your business, in your family; that he would not forsake you either upon your bed by night or in your business by day. And may God grant, when you and I shall come to the end of this year, we may have a good tale to tell concerning the faithfulness of God in having answered our prayers, and having fulfilled his promise.

FOR MEDITATION: Do you open up every area of your life to the One who has promised never to forsake his people? Are there any aspects of your relationship with him which are not all that they should be (Malachi 1: 6)?