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Four years ago I sat with a brother whose wife was dying. It had been a bitter sweet Christmas and a dark way to begin a new year. The husband and wife, and all their family knew that this would be the last Christmas together. What can one say to these, who like so many saints, are facing very dark stormy waters? To say to them "A Happy New Year" is a dreadful cruelty and evading of reality.

For many this has been a very dark year, one storm after another. For some it was a child being removed by death, for others another family member, for others, a loss of business, a loss of health, a spiritual fall from which they shall never recover. What can be said to them?

For every saint they stand (humanly speaking) on the edge of the great unknown, in the kindness of God completely ignorant of that which lies ahead.

In the late 1800's the Faroe Islands in the North Atlantic, was visited by the pioneer missionary William Sloan. This was the man of God who wrote the beautiful hymn, "Praise the Lord and leave tomorrow". In these cold wind swept Islands north of Scotland, William served the Lord for many years. As a result of his preaching the gospel and visiting the villages and crofts, the first assembly in those islands was planted in Torshavn, the capital. That was in 1879, an assembly that is still functioning today. In 1887 when in Shetland, God used his ministry in the gospel to do a mighty work when 40 people professed faith in Christ. An assembly was begun at Selivoe, and is still functioning to this day. It was on his last day on earth, on his seventy sixth birthday, Sept.4th 1914, William asked his son Andrew to read the Bible verse for the day. It was: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Prov. 3:5) He commended his family to God and then taking leave from them entered the presence of the Lord. This verse had been the way of life for this beloved servant of God, and understanding this, we can see what a perfect epitaph God gave to him in this scripture.

A man who lived for God and left tomorrow in His hands. As we stand on the edge of this New Year, how blessed we would be, what freedom from worry and care, if we:

*Praise the Lord and leave tomorrow, in thy Father's loving hands
Burden not thyself with sorrow, for secure the promise stands.
He is faithful, He is faithful, leave thy troubles in His hands.*

*Trust today and leave tomorrow, each day has enough of care
Therefore whatsoever thy burden, God will give thee strength to bear.
He is faithful, He is faithful, cast on Him thy every care.*

*Pray today and let tomorrow bring with it what're it may
Hear they loving Father promise strength according to thy day.
He is faithful, He is faithful, trust Him therefore come what may.*

As we stand on the edge of the great unknown let us learn from Ezekiel 40 that it was at the beginning of the year God revealed some of the future glories to Him.

As we look back and see the sins and failures of the past year, let us listen to the encouraging words of Exodus 12:2: "This month . . . shall be the first month of the year to you, a new beginning".

For those who face dark lonely days ahead, days of grief and dismay, let us remember the words of Deut. 11:12: "The LORD thy God careth. . . from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." God's care is unchanging.

Father, as we stand on this the edge of a New Year, unknown to us are the joys and sorrows that will fall across our path. For every day of peace and happiness we give thee our thanks, in every dark and stormy way we praise thee that we can turn to thee, the Rock of our Salvation. In our times of delightfulness may we not forget thee; in the times of affliction not turn away from thee; in the loneliness of widowhood may we find thee the Husband

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thou hast promised to be; in the joy of new parenthood may we learn the solemnity of responsibility for the new life given. In the disappointments of life let us find in thee true joy which will never fail, in the sorrows of life let us find in thee, to be the Source of all Comfort. Help us to be more Christ like with our fellow men, more God like in an ungodly world and more delightful to thee by the indwelling power of thy most Holy Spirit. This we humbly ask in our Saviour's name. Amen.

.... *Rowan Jennings*