

Written for this Paper.

"UNTO THIS LAST."

To all things that have a beginning there is an end; to the first of every thing there is a last, and that is not infrequently foreshadowed by a revelation without any personal experience.

Men need not pass the gates of death themselves to realize that this is among the inevitables, but the years flit by almost noiselessly, while each one says in greeting "I wish you a Happy New Year." And yet every day, week and month has had its quota of change. Some have been expected, others have come as sudden as the thunderbolt from an almost cloudless sky.

Human nature has its insolvable problems. Men are reaching out in all directions for the unobtainable, until ambition falters, plans are overturned, schemes fail, hopes perish, and at times it would appear as if the blight of disappointment rested upon a large portion of human effort and upon its remotest anticipations.

It is natural for most persons to have their lucid moments now and then in the midst of general insanity; for there are times when reflection overrides the crush and craze of modern life. It may be a catastrophe of some kind, one beyond the reach of any personal care or forethought. It may be some bereavement or affliction which commanded all of skill, means and affection, but which even this combination could not avert, or perchance a crumbling fortune from business changes or perils of the market; stagnation, ruin, comes in this guise, or men fall and fall as the result of inexperience, of too much self-confidence, too little forethought; or of an indifference which lives by moments, and cares but for the attractive present.

It was said of old, "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera;" and this has been in part the ground work for astrological pretenders in the past and present. Nativities have been cast, and horoscopes formulated, for the protection of the superstitious, who have been guided in all important movements of life by asserted favorable or unfavorable conjunctions of the stellar world. Lucky and unlucky days have been predicted on signs and aspects, which were as influential on individual destiny as the cyclones of prehistoric ages.

Nevertheless individuals and generations have come and gone as "a dream of the night." To all that began there has been as will come an end, and the ages have also passed since the sage exclaimed, "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goes;" to all there is an apparent end, at least. The story that observation and experience tell of man, is equally true of nations. They began and flourished and died. Ruins here and there tell some few things of their grandeur and magnificence; but unless the details are written and preserved in other archives than those of earth they are forever lost, as impossible of reproduction as are the details of personal history to a centenarian who is just hovering by his open grave.

There is no abiding sense of responsibility or accountability in the average man or in communities of

nations. Much of human action is based on expediency or opportunity. Few are proof against the temptations of stretched and feverish life, and among the most pretentious there is a lamentable difference between the theories and thoughts of the Nazaren, and his most pronounced disciples.

These conclusions assert themselves with particular force at this special season of the year. Homage has been paid at universal Christendom to "the Prince of Peace," and it would seem as if Providence had allowed the injection of a few brief days between the celebration and the beginning of a New Year, in order that a practical application of Christian thought might permeate the hearts of all, so that a lenient, a forgiving spirit might generally prevail.

"There is a time," said the wise man, "wherein one man ruleth over another to his own hurt," and there are those who have rejoiced in the downfall of a neighbor. Who is there so unfamiliar with human nature, as not to have known those who fairly enjoyed having some one whom they could easily crush and destroy? It is a strange phase of human nature, but it needs not the lamp of Diogenes to flout them in this day and generation. It is said "the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel;" but many a Gentile has exhibited more skill in dealing with an errant or unfortunate Mormon than some brothers have given to brothers of more magnificent pretensions.

Some years ago we knew a man who, by untoward circumstances, was adjudged a bankrupt. His pride of soul and sense of honor were profoundly touched. He loved the right and wanted it. Considerable of his lovedness was to the outside world—men in business who sympathized with misfortune. But his co-religionists wanted to exact the uttermost farthing, and because this was not forthcoming, they tendered for many years thereafter only hard feeling and harsh words. Sympathy was unexpressed, and that burden of uncalculated and unmerciful criticism is not yet all allayed.

"With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again, and with what judgment ye judge, such you also be judged," said the Great One. Little as we are in love with continuous renewal of covenant and redemption, it is not untimely to suggest that "there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine who never went astray." Strapping by the tier of the dying year, and peering into the future we may never see or know, let many past things be forgotten and forgiven; just as when by the merest of an old friend, who had his failings and infirmities, we cover these with the mantle of charitable oblivion, and write as "with a pen of iron and lead to the rock for ever," his excellencies, his good traits, his noble deeds, and even his unfulfilled intentions which were ever for the good and true.

We may not multiply words, although men's hearts may be soot and receptive under the realities of the ordinary time. "The end (if the year) of a thing is better than the beginning," said Solomon. If Isaac Newton truly said of times and seasons, of thoughts and acts, of aspirations and results, there

is progress, slow though it may appear to be. Men of business, religious men, men in positions of responsibility, surely would prefer this, not a selfish betterment, but one more in accordance with right, truth, mercy and "charity which never faileth!"

The influence of example, of the home, of the pulpit and press is to be gauged by the results thereof. With them good, wholesome, edifying, corrective and improving, the world becomes better. When, if inspired of selfishness, of contention, of prejudice, of simple power, the end is not clearly "better than the beginning;" or if while in this life it may appear to be so, the unsleeping agencies of God and gooduers will carry forward the account where outlawry has never yet prevailed, and separation—compensation—will be as inevitable as is divine rule throughout the universe at last.

For two and a half years we have endeavored under a prescribed caption to urge through these columns our individual thoughts, backed by such aspiration as was within our reach. Looking over that past, our aim has been to do good. Ordinary human ambition in no way prompted what has been said or done. It was the cause, the people which were engrossed and loved. To that life has been given, many a midnight hour and many a precious thought, and not infrequently a sacrifice has been tendered from an anxious soul. It is hoped that "the end is better than the beginning," and that whether pen or pencil, may be used again in this direction or otherwise, that better or brighter, more potent ones may fill the allotted space. In silence or oblivion is the undying hope that "this people will ever be our people, and their God our God." To be with and of them in sorrow or triumph; to bear with them the burden of opprobrium, or to wear the victor's crown, is worthy of a great man's ambition, much more of one who is and has been "a man of the people," without aspiration for honors or office save that of an unknown but loving worker in a God-given and glorious cause.

MISSIONARIES IN KENTUCKY.

BURKESVILLE, Cumberland Co., Ky.,
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I write to let you know how we are getting along in this part of the South. There are many here who have had their minds opened to the truths of the doctrine of the Latter-day Saints. Some side with our views even against their own preachers. They know we are right and will acknowledge the same, but do not think it necessary to obey the Gospel as we teach it. Some here say they have had visions and dreams informing them that light would soon be given them. They listen patiently while we explain the different principles of the Gospel to them; but it is very hard to convince them that they have to obey those principles in order to get into the kingdom of heaven—there is so much teaching that all are in the kingdom, and that it does not matter to what church we belong we can all go on and do the will of God without obeying His commands.

We have many friends in this county, among them Judge Herford, of Burkesville, who says, "Gentlemen