

[From the papers of Dr. Gordon H. Clark. From "The Home Evangel", date unknown.]

A TWO-MINUTE NEW YEAR'S SERMON

After wandering forty years in the desert, the Israelites were about to enter the promised land. As they prepared to cross the Jordan, Joshua gave them these instructions: Follow the ark, for "*ye have not passed this way heretofore.*" Joshua: 3:4

This has always been a favorite New Year's text, and it is even more appropriate this year, for no one knows what a day may bring forth. War always brings changes, and changes of many kinds. There are political changes. New nations emerge; strong nations become weak; boundaries are altered; and so on. War also brings social, moral, and religious changes—hardly ever changes for the better. For example: the Civil War brought the Sunday newspapers to distract from the church services. The first World War brought an appalling increase in divorce. This war seems to be bringing open and unashamed licentiousness. War has never improved morality.

No sane man today can view the future with optimism. And yet the Christian should not fall into pessimistic despair. Joshua faced an unknown future, but he knew that many things would be the same. The people would have the same faith in God—at times; and at other times they would doubt God as they had done in the past. They would worship God and win victories; they would sin against God and be punished with defeats. This was the future for Joshua. It was true also in the period of the Judges. After Solomon too, the new future brought much that was the same: idolatry, punishment, reform, idolatry. *In all history the new is not wholly new, nor wholly the same. The externals change, but the fundamentals remain unchanged. Most important of all, God is the same.*

We do not know the way that 1945 will take. Nor did Joshua know his way. But God had given Joshua the ark to lead him. It had led him before. He could trust God's leading. God has given us His Word, the Bible. It is all inspired; it is all profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness, in order that the Christian may be completely furnished unto every good work. The earthly future is not bright. There will be wars and pestilence until Christ returns to reign. But in the meantime

I fear no foe with Thee at hand to bless;

*Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.*

G.H.C.