

Sunday Reading.

The New Year.

BY H. M. D.

I sat alone in my chamber,
The light was but a low;
I had finished the work before me
Begun long months ago.

'Twas nearing the midnight hour,
As I leaning back in my chair,
I heard the soft, sweet chiming
Of distant bells on the air.

Then open I threw the shutter,
And gazed on a lovely scene—
The earth lay wrapped in ermine,
'Neath a full moon's radiant beam.

And, ushered amid such brightness,
Came a smiling, glad New Year;
While voices in yonder chapel
Sang it a welcome dear.

Then I turned again to the table,
Where my work was laid aside;
'Twas finished and neatly folded,
Just as the old year died.

Thus may my soul's fair garment
Finished and ready be,
When the joyful bells of heaven
Usher Eternity.

The Old Year and the New.

Only for a moment as they crossed
each other's paths, they met face to face
—the Old Year and the New—each
moving on his separate way, each going
onward to the new and unknown, the
untried future which lay before.

Bowed and burdened was the Old
Year. The face was lined and furrowed
and marred, and the shadows which
rested over it told of strange tales which
they yet half concealed, and which a
moment's time might not reveal. Bent
and old and ugly, no lingering vestige
of a former grandeur gave any token
that the Old Year had been other than
he was,—imperial yet decrepit, moving
steadily to the eternal, where countless
years had passed before him.

The New Year, clothed in pure and
unstained garments, and lovely with the
bloom and beauty of the freshness of
youth, with graceful and exuberant
motion seemed to walk on air, his eyes
beaming with hope.

Above and behind him the fluttering
wings of a recording angel moved apace
with buoyant footsteps.

The Old and New, seemingly strange
extremes of time, met thus when the
hush of silence and of night enfolded
the world in its calm and peace.

From afar in the sky the great round
moon looked down upon the dethroned
monarch and the prince who came to
take his place, and the twinkling stars
that had hung over many and many a
New Year, and wiser than the Old or
the New, looked on and kept their
secrets.

Each moving onward, had little time
to talk to the other, yet the Old Year
spoke.

'New Year,' he said, 'I am filled with
wisdom.'
'And hideous to look upon,' said the
New Year.

'Yet I am filled with wisdom,' repeat-
ed the Old Year, with something of
compassion in his tremulous tones.

'I shall be wise,' replied the New
Year.

'And when you are wise you will
look as I look now.'

with a clean white sheet before them,
and a promise of kind deeds and pure
thoughts and a better life. Everybody
was going to be good.

'Dear Humanity!' exclaimed the
New Year, exulting over the deference
shown him. 'Should I ever grow old,
I would never take away your joys
and pleasures, but only your griefs.'

So this youthful king on his throne
reigned joyously, with the old and young
the fair and good, the wicked even, to
do him homage and reverence.

But the World was old, and the days,
how fast they flew; the Year felt the
gathering weight of their resistless
course.

After a time, people grew tired of the
New Year. It was strange how they
forgot their promises and resolutions;
how little they cared for him, or spoke
of him only to complain. And how the
new leaves were turned back again, or
stained with darker pictures than the
old.

The New Year noticed all this, and
the Recording angel was always busy.

Then one day he turned to the Old
Year's records.
He found that the life of the Old
Year had begun fair enough, but how
the misery of it deepened as he went on.
There were some bright places, it was
true; but ah! it was no wonder he was
decrepit and bowed with such a weight
of suffering and sin and calamity.

The New Year closed the book, and
it was written that he was growing
wiser.

Yes, the New Year was growing
wiser, and as he gained in knowledge,
he opened the book again, and looked
longer and oftener at the other year's
recorded days.

It was odd that the bright spots which
at first had been but few, seemed to
occur oftener and grow brighter, but it
was only from the habit of comparing
the Old Year's life with his own.

As time went on and wisdom forced
itself upon him, he could not fail to
notice that he was growing to look like
the Old Year. The sprightliness of
youth was changing to a bent and en-
feebled form, and before he well knew
it, he carried two burdens. With Hu-
manity's griefs he also carried Human-
ity's joys and pleasures.

So the New Year grew wise, but the
New Year had grown old; and the Re-
cording Angel ere he closed his records
wrote: 'The Year at this last moment
glances backward. He sees the bright-
ness of life's beginning, a faint emblem
of the eternal sunshine to which he is
hastening.'

'He sees that wisdom comes only
with age, that, bought as it is by hard
experience, it is useless to any save
himself. That each and all learn not
from the experiences of others, but from
their own, and that youth cares not to
listen or to heed.

'He sees that this is well and wisely
planned, for youth would be blighted
and no longer lovely if it took the bur-
dens which age had brought to another.

'He sees why people's good resolu-
tions failed, and why the 'new leaf' of
the new year so often turned back. Ah,
weak Humanity! if it would only re-
member that every day is the begin-
ning of a new year and turn a new leaf!

The leaves would be kept purer then;
it is because they are turned so seldom
that the effort to keep them spotless
fails and only the constant trying makes
life pure. A brighter dawning closes
out the vision.'

His work is ended, and the old New
Year crosses the threshold of Eternity.
—Cottage Hearth.

What do you do?

'How do you do?' is a question we
have often asked and answered. It
would be well for us if it were more
frequently asked, among God's people,
'What do you do?' 'For if ye love them
that love you,' said Jesus, 'what re-
ward have ye? Do not even the public-
ans the same? And if ye salute your
brethren only, what do ye more than
others? Do not even the publicans so?'

What are you doing more than oth-
ers? What are you doing more than
any good, upright, noble man or woman
of the world is doing? And yet how
much more you profess than these
people of the world profess. Think of
it, reader; think of the vows you have
taken before men and angels—vows

recorded, not only in heaven, but in
your church covenant. Think of what
you have said in times of earnest reli-
gious experiences; what you have prom-
ised over and over in prayer-meetings
and elsewhere. How much the world
expects of you in view of all this, and
have they not the right to expect much.

You profess to have been 'born again,'
to have become a 'new creature in
Christ Jesus;' that 'you are not your
own,' etc. These are marvellous con-
fessions. Such men and women ought
to 'turn this world upside down.' Such
lives ought to be 'separate from sin-
ners.' You who 'were dead in tres-
passes and sins,' profess to have been
'made alive unto God.' Do you live
as becometh such professions? What
do you more than others? Look at
your professions and then look at your
living. This is a practical, personal
question. What do I more than those
who make no such professions? What
is your answer?

Eternity.

Rev. A. B. Earle, in a recent sermon,
gave the following illustration:

Suppose one little bird should have
its life prolonged until it carried this
earth all away, in the following manner:

The bird should take one, and only
one, particle of dust in its bill, and fly
away with it and be gone a thousand
years, and leaving it, return and take
another particle, and be gone with that
a thousand years, and this one bird con-
tinues this process until it had carried
away every particle of dust of which
the whole earth is composed. A thou-
sand years with each particle of dust.

During all this time the soul is either
praising God in heaven or cursing him
in the dark world. This would seem a
long eternity. But this same bird is
employed to bring the earth all back in
the same way, a thousand years with
each particle. But this is not the end.

This one bird is to repeat the same
process as many times as there are par-
ticles of dust in the whole earth, and
yet we are not one minute nearer the
end of eternity than when the bird first
commenced. Here my mind tires and
cries: 'O, eternity, eternity, am I to
live somewhere forever?' How im-
portant then that I prepare at once for
an eternity of joy and peace that I may
say in death: 'Come, Lord Jesus, I am
waiting.'

I didn't go once to be tempted.

Not long since I was explaining to
some young visitors the manner of
using a Chinese opium-pipe, and the
terrible effects of opium-smoking, in
destroying not alone the health of the
body, but its still more fatal influence
upon the mind and soul. A young Chi-
nese friend who was present looked in-
tently at the beautiful pipe I held in my
hand. He sighed deeply as his eye
rested on the costly inlaid work and the
dainty adornments intended as so many
snares to entice the fancy of the unwary.
Possibly memory may have been busy
unearthing some dear one in his far-off
native land—a father it may be, or an
elder brother who had fallen a victim
to this terrible habit. But he said
nothing then, and I was thinking sadly
of the enticements that at every turn,
in theatre, bar-room, circus, and gam-
bling-saloon, are daily holding forth
their invitations to our sons and broth-
ers in this dear land of Bibles while
vice is disguised in beautiful garments,
and only the life that is 'hid with
Christ in God' is safe from the snares
of the destroyer. God help the young
man who trusts only to his own strength!

Presently I remarked that I had
never but once been inside of an opium-
saloon, face to face with the haggard
countenances, sunken eyes, and emacia-
ted forms of its votaries; and that for
weeks afterwards the horrid groans,
s shrieks, and imprecations of the wretch-
ed victims so rang in my ears that noth-
ing save a stern sense of duty could
ever induce me to enter again one of
those places of torment. Instantly the
young Chinaman sprang to his feet, and
spoke out eagerly:

'You 'venture, madam, one time
more dan I. I did not go once into
opium-house to be tempted. Sometimes
man think himself vella stiong, and he
go into opium-shop, not meaning to be
tempted; but by-and-by he find him-
self vella weak, so that he can no more

stay away. He go in wise man, he
come out vella foolish; he go in lich
man, he come out poor beggar; he go
in good man, kind husband, fader, son,
he come away like child of de evil
one; den soon he die, go lib wid him
always. So I think for myself I not go
in once, not see-oder man smoke opium;
and den I not be tempted to smoke
myself. Maybe I be stiong, but I too
much fear I be vella weak, so I stay
away.'

Here was indeed true wisdom—not
to go in the way of temptation, not to
try wrong-doing even once, not to trust
to his own strength to resist evil influ-
ences, nor even to look on and see others
sin, lest, being weaker than he supposed
himself, he should be tempted to follow
in their footsteps.

The good Book says, 'Enter not into
the path of the wicked, and go not in
the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass
not by it, turn from it, and pass away.'

And what this young Chinaman said
of opium-houses is also just as true of
the thousands of beer-saloons, grog-
shops, and drinking-houses of all sorts
that are scattered as snares for the feet
of the unwary 'all over our land—the
theatres, bro'hels, and infidel clubs—
wherever God is dishonored and his holy
Word set at naught. Do not venture
even once, young man, to brave the
danger, to draw in one breath of their
polluted atmosphere. Remember the
words, 'Sometimes man thinks himself
vella stiong, and he go in, not meaning
to be tempted; but by-and-by he find
himself vella weak, so that he can no
more stay away.'—Fannie Roper
Feudge in Illustrated Christian Weekly.

A New Year's Word.

BY THE LATE WILLIAM LAMSON, D. D.

'And he thanked God and took courage.'
—Acts 28: 15.

It was my custom, when I was pastor,
to endeavor to select a text for New
Year's which should be a profitable word
for myself and my hearers to take with
us into the untrodden path before us.
Among these selected texts were these
words concerning Paul: *And he thanked
God and took courage.* Gratitude for
the past, and courage for the future.

These, I think, are appropriate at all
times, but especially at the opening of
a New Year. The season invites to
retrospection and anticipation, to looking
back and looking forward. Every
thoughtful person, as he stands on the
dividing line between two years, must
leave his thoughts busied with the mem-
ories of the past and the expectations of
the future. Paul in such backward
and onward looking found occasion for
thankfulness and inspiration to courage.

It is not accidental that these, gratitude
and courage, followed each other in
the experience of Paul, or that they
are here coupled in the record. They
are not independent exercises of the
soul. There is on the contrary, a real
and very intimate relation between
gratitude and courage. One grows out
of, proceeds from, the other; or rather,
both proceed from the same mental
look, draw their inspiration from the
same source. But mark, it is gratitude,
not gladness, which Paul experienced.

These are not identical. I may be
glad for that for which I feel not an
emotion of gratitude. In multitudes
of cases in which the expression 'I am
thankful' is used, it means only 'I am
glad.' I may be glad with no reference
to the source whence a benefit comes.
Gratitude always rises to the Giver,
and fastens, centres, on Him, while
gladness fastens on the gift and rests
there. The most confirmed atheist, to
whom this universe is a fatherless
creation, may be glad and joyous, but
he cannot be grateful; nor can his
gladness inspire courage. To whom
can he be thankful whose dark creed
says, 'No God—there is no God.'
Now the same disposition which refers
the past to God, awakening gratitude,
by committing the future to Him,
inspires courage. The same Being
who has ruled in the past will rule in
the future. What he has been is a
prophecy and pledge of what He will
be. He never changes.

I think a thoughtful man, standing on
the threshold of a New Year, and going
forward to meet its unseen and untold
experiences cannot fail to feel his need
of courage. Know you, my brother
what perplexities, what reverses, what

sorrows, what sufferings of body and of
mind, you are to meet as you tread the
path before you during the coming year
You have no glass that can reveal that
path to your vision, even for a day.
And yet it is not optional with you
with you whether you will go forward.

If you could foresee every step of the
way, and find it rough and stormy, full
of terrors, there is no faltering, no turn-
ing aside onward you must go. Is not
courage requisite, unless, indeed, all
anticipation and forethought are aban-
doned? But whence the courage we
need? It comes, it can come, only from
a grateful trust in a superintending
Providence, the firm conviction that a
wise and good Being will order all that
can affect us. And looking back over
the year just ended, how numerous and
weighty the causes of gratitude! What
blessings have been crowded into every
hour! As we review and recount them,
we can adopt the exultant language of
Isaiah, 'I will trust and not be afraid
for the Lord Jehovah is my strength
and my song.' He who can go forward
with this song in his heart and on his
lips will have a courage that nothing
can disturb. He may go forward with-
out anxiety and without trembling.

Now, my brother, let us recall the past
till, filled with thankfulness, we can go
forward with untrembling courage and
joyful confidence.

'My lifted eye without a tear
The gathering storm shall see,
My steadfast heart shall know no fear,
That heart shall rest on thee.'

Hold On!

Deacon Bridgman, father of Laura
Bridgman, the deaf mute, lay upon a
sick and dying bed. None of his chil-
dren save Laura had consecrated them-
selves to the service of Christ, and the
good man's soul was heavily burdened
on account of the unsaved ones.

'Do labor for the salvation of my
children,' said he to his pastor, who sat
by his bedside.

'What more can I do for them?' in-
quired the man of God, feeling that he
had endeavored to be faithful to those
under his care.

'Hold on!' was the reply of the
dying man.

The good deacon passed from works
to reward, trusting in the never-failing
promises of God, and leaving the pastor
to 'hold on.'

A year passed away, and the blessed
results of 'holding on' began to be
apparent. The pastor had the joy of
knowing that Deacon Bridgman's
youngest child was brought into the
kingdom of Christ, and was permitted
to baptize and welcome the same to the
fellowship of the church.

Parents, if you have children out of
Christ in whose hearts you have prayer-
fully and faithfully endeavored to sow
the good seed of the Word of God and
have watered it with many tears, hold on!

Christian friend, whatever may be
the burden of your prayer, and although
there be no immediate response to your
petition, hold on! If the blessing tarry,
pray on and wait for it. 'He that
goeth forth and weepeth bearing
precious seed, shall doubtless come
again with rejoicing, bringing his
sheaves with him.' M. W.

The night in more suited to prayer
than the day. I never wake in the
middle of the night without feeling in-
duced to consume with God. One feels
brought more into contact with Him.
The whole world around us, we think,
is asleep. But the great Shepherd of
Israel slumbers not, nor sleeps. He is
awake, and so are we. We feel in the
solemn and silent night alone with God.
And then there is everything in the
circumstances to lead one to pray.
The past is often vividly recalled. The
voices of the dead are heard, and their
forms crowd round you. No sleep can
bind them. The night seems the time
in which they should hold spiritual
communion with man. The future,
too, throws its dark shadows over you
—the night of the grave, the certain
death-bed, the night in which no man
can work. And then everything makes
such an impression on the mind at night
when the brain is susceptible. The low
sough of the wind among the trees; the
roaring or eerie of some neighbouring
stream; the bark or howl of a dog; the
general impressive silence—all tend to
sober and solemnize the mind, and to
force it from the world, and its vanities,
which then seem asleep to God, who
alone can uphold and defend it.—Nor
man McLeod.

Come, O Christ!

BY THE REV. J. CLARK, NICTAUX.

Come, O Christ! and reign within me,
By Thy loving spirit win me,
Make me all Thine own;
All my expectations brighten,
Manhood sanctify, and heighten,
Comfort, strengthen, and enlighten,
Sin and self dethrone.

Come, O Christ! my soul is weary,
Waiting through the midnight dreary,
Thy sweet face to see;

Come, and break the bands that bind me,
Come, and bless the work assigned me,
Let my next moment find me
Faithful, Lord! to Thee.

Come, Christ! why tarry longer?
Love grows warmer, faith grows stronger
When I feel Thee near;
Perfection Thy new creation,
Manifest Thy great salvation,
Bring the promise and consummation,
Quickly, Lord! I appear.
—Inar's Christian Treasury.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.
Ministerial Education.

As the most suitable reply to a letter
of Rev. E. H. Sweet, in your issue of
12th inst., will you please insert the
accompanying correspondence.

J. W. BARSS,
Treas. Min. Ed. Board.

WOLFVILLE, 14th Dec., 1883.

Dear Bro.—The Board for distributing
funds for ministerial students met about
this date last year. The money in hand
was divided between twelve applicants,
being \$20 each.

Four others were reserved till more
money came in. One of these not get-
ting a licence was marked off the list of
claimants, leaving three still to be at-
tended to. About the last of June \$30
were in hand, which was given to Rev.
Dr. Welton to give two of the three, had
it been divided into three parts the
amounts would be very small, so it was
considered best to leave your application
till other monies came in.

As you were then away Dr. Welton
intended having the payment made on
your return to College. In the hurry of
preparing to go to Toronto 'tis likely he
forgot it. I also forgot it had not been
paid; there was no money at the disposal
of the Board till the last of August.

I feel assured that no member of the
Board wished or intended to ignore your
claim.

The difficulty with the Board has been
an inability to meet all the claims for
aid put before them from the small
amount of funds at their disposal.

I now enclose you a cheque for Twenty
Dollars, which I hope will not be too
late to be found useful.

Yours very truly,
J. W. BARSS,
Treas. Min. Ed. Board.

WOLFVILLE, Dec. 21, 1883.

Dear Bro.—Your kind letter of 14th
inst. received. Thanks for the cheque,
but cannot accept it under circumstan-
ces as they at present exist; I would
rather incur a heavy debt than the
slightest suspicion on the part of the
Board that I am taking what does not
belong to me.

Yours very truly,
E. H. SWEET.

P. S.—The cheque was returned.

J. W. B.

For the Christian Messenger.

The New Year and Didactics.

To the Editor of the Christian Messenger:

DEAR SIR,—The same bells that peal
and ring and chime responsive to the
glad joy of Christians at the return of
Christmas, full of grateful remem-
brances, heart-touching reminders, soul-con-
verting repetitions of the angel message
to the Judean shepherds, 'Behold! I
bring you glad tidings of great joy which
shall be to all people,' heralding the
advent of a Saviour which was, and
which is, 'Christ the Lord,' and of the
chorus of the multitude of the heavenly
host, 'Glorious to God in the highest, and
on earth peace, good will among men!'
will also proclaim the joy of many, and,
may we not hope, of all the Baptists of
these Maritime Provinces, that the great
and terrible war about didactics is over,
that the strife of tongues, the fierce
clashing of pens, the fears and tumults
of the people, are hushed and ended
forever; that Dr. Rand's mild, magnani-
mous answer to the opposers of the new
chair will win for him their hand, their
heart, and their help; that the change