

RELIGIOUS INT

New Year Hymn.

A bright New Year! With Jesus for thy Keeper, Thy Guide, and Helper, what hast thou to fear? A Sun, whose lustre all thy days shall brighten, A Star, to make thy darkest night shine clear! As each new morn shall dawn—each day shall waken— To Him who loves thee let thy thoughts arise; And from thy heart may loving songs of gladness Ascend unto thy King above the skies! A bright New Year! Its pages white and spotless— Its leaves unstained by even one dark blot! Oh, as it passes, may each hour be golden, And rich in fruitfulness that fadeeth not! Another year to witness for thy Master: To lead to higher joys thy brother man; To point the wanderer to his Father's mansion, And by thy life reveal God's wondrous plan. —The Christian.

The Light of the World.

Jesus is called "the Sun of righteousness." He called Himself "the Light of the world." Before He came "the whole world was lost in the darkness of sin." It was a wicked world, an ignorant world, an unhappy world. The darkness was not total. There were glimmering lights here and there. The ignorance of the world was relieved by the wisdom of a few wise men, and the wickedness was relieved by the lives of some good men and women. There was some light in ancient philosophy, some light in science, and considerable light in ancient revelation from God. Many true prophets had been raised up who spoke to men the truth of God. But these were only stars in the firmament. It was still night, although the darkness was relieved by the stars of God. When Jesus came the Sun rose and the morning dawned. Those who sat in darkness saw a great light. He poured a flood of light on the human mind. He revealed the character and will of God, the nature and evil of sin, the way of salvation, and by Him life and immortality were brought to light. Since Jesus came the poor have had some consideration and some hope. Before His time poverty was regarded as a disgrace. There was no asylum for the poor, and no chance for them to better their condition. The light which He shed on the world has shown us that the righteous poor are as worthy as the best. The poor have the Gospel preached unto them. "Who ever thought of bringing instruction or comfort to the poor until Jesus pointed out the way? The poor man still has little chance of improvement in those countries where the Gospel is unknown, but in proportion as the Gospel is preached and practiced the poor rise in the world. As it is with the poor so it is with the sick, the blind, the unfortunate classes. Woman has been elevated by Christ. One poet sings about "The Light of Asia," but what little light Asia has comes from the Sun of righteousness. It is only within a few years that laws have existed in India and China prohibiting the wanton destruction of female children and the burning of widows. It is only where this Sun of righteousness shines that women are educated. It is only where Jesus reigns that happy homes are found. Contrast a Christian home with a typical oriental home. In the one the father, mother, and children sit at the same table and treat each other with respect and confidence and love. Kindness and sympathy reign. In the other the husband is a sort of despot, ruling with a rod of iron. His wives are hidden behind curtains, and may not come into his presence without his express command, and even then they come crawling like spaniels, not knowing whether they are to receive punishment or praise. They eat their bread separate from their lord and master, and regard themselves as his servants. His children are in his power almost absolutely. There is no family table, no family altar, no family Bible, no family affection, no mutual respect and confidence. "The Light of the world" has wrought this change. Other changes of equal significance and importance have taken place since Jesus came. When the sun rises and floods the mountains and valleys with light the world awakes and begins to sing. The birds chant the praises of their Creator, and the trees of the wood clap their hands. Nature seems to rejoice in light. Even the sick revive when the morning sun begins to shine, and the mourner is comforted. The evils which are covered and protected by the darkness are all modified, and some of them entirely suspended when the light shines. So the light of Christianity has filled the world with our Lord. Mary sang timorously

Anna sang, and the disciples took up the strain and sang praises when they saw the light. The disciples of Jesus have been singing ever since. They sing because their sins are forgiven, because hope has sprung up within them, because the world is growing better, because righteousness and truth are marching on. They sing in their worship and in their work and in the fires of persecution and affliction. They sing in their costly temples and in their humble chapels. This song shall roll on until the light of God shall drive all darkness away and fill the whole world with joy.

"Count Me In."

BY MARY D. SCHAEFFER. It was refreshing to hear a gentleman say to a company of young people who were planning a new organ for their Sunday-school, "I hear you are going to buy a new organ. That's right; count me in." There was no waiting to be urged, not even to be asked, for a contribution, but a voluntary offering of help that was much needed.

A financial agent for a needed church school was soliciting funds from various congregations. Just when he was most discouraged because of the small returns and many refusals, a lady in moderate financial circumstances called upon him, and gave the largest contribution he had received for many days.

She had not waited to be urged, not even to be visited and asked for a contribution, but had virtually and substantially said, "Count me in."

These and similar instances are particularly noticeable, because they are in such marked contrast with the spirit too commonly prevailing among Christian people, not only with reference to financial matters, but to almost everything connected with church work.

Instead of a cheery "Count me in," do we not more frequently hear such remarks as these: "If they want any money from me, they've got to come for it; I'm not going to that church any more; no one pays any attention to me; Yes, I taught a Sunday-school class, and took an active part in the Christian Endeavor Society while we lived in M—, but since we've come here, no one has invited us to those services, so I've not put in my appearance; Our pastor didn't say anything to me about that literature committee, so he needn't expect me to do anything else."

The fields are white to harvest, but these should-be laborers are waiting to be greeted, appreciated, invited, urged,—not by the Lord of the harvest, but by their fellow-men.

Many of us may not have enough money at command to say "Count me in" to the numerous financial needs of the church, but there is no one who cannot offer a willing service in some of the many avenues of Christian work.

What if we are not formally appointed on a committee for specific duty? Every Christian is a committee of one, divinely appointed to do the duty that lies nearest. If we are visitors in a strange church, let us not lay to much stress on the absence of greetings, but rather count ourselves in as one of God's worshipping congregation; then we shall not be chiefly impressed with the cordiality, or lack of it, among that people.

If we moved into a new town, and entered into new church relations, we should count ourselves in, and let the people know we belong to them by our presence at the Sunday and week-night services, by our evident interest in their various undertakings, and by our willingness to go halfway to receive recognition and greeting. Such a "count-me-in" spirit is not offensive or presumptuous, believing itself equal to everything, and failing to recognize its limitations. It is rather the spirit "that vaunteth not itself, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil." It is like unto the spirit of Him who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."—S. J. S. Times.

A Motto for the Whole Year.

It is a good idea to take for a New Year's motto something which will be suggestive for every day in the year. That which is appropriate to New Year's Day cannot be inappropriate for every day. We give our readers a suggestive motto for every day in the year "Looking unto Jesus!"

Looking to Jesus will take our gaze from self. It will cause us to forget self and the self-life, with all its encumbrances to forget God and humanity. It means to forget our feelings, and not be influenced by them. Too many estimate their religion by their feelings when they feel exuberant, they think they have a great deal of religion; when depressed they think they have none. The steady look at Jesus lifts the soul above the ebbing and

flowing of emotion, and prevents the spiritual life from disaster at this point. Looking to Jesus means that every day this year we shall get our eyes off other people. Many years ago we read these lines on a little card—they have never been forgotten:

"If you want to be distracted, look around, If you want to be miserable, look within, If you want to be happy, look to Jesus."

If we get our eyes off other people and onto Jesus, we shall not be discouraged either at opposition or criticism. We shall not be hurt at slight or fancy we are slighted. It will cure this, if our eyes are only fully fixed on Jesus. For a clear, steady look at Jesus brings that which compensates for the lack of all other things.

Looking to Jesus we shall not be entranced or hypnotized by the glamour of this present evil world all about us. It pretends to afford happiness and peace, but it is a liar when it promises these. And there is nothing which better enables us to penetrate its hypocritical mask than the light which comes to our vision when we get a good look at Jesus.

"Its pleasures can no longer please, Nor happiness afford; Far from my thoughts be joys like these, Now I have seen the Lord."

Looking to Jesus we shall obtain and retain salvation.

Looking to Jesus we shall have constant increase of light and joy and peace. This will constantly strengthen faith. This will bring support under every trial of the year to come.

Looking to Jesus we shall have all we need every day in the year.

Looking to Jesus we shall be astonished at the many other things we do not need nor wish.

Lovest Thou Me?

All through the four Gospels the tender love of Jesus Christ, the Saviour, His sympathy for poor, sinful, fallen humanity, is taught in soothingly sweet and impressive lessons. But one of the most beautiful, striking and important lessons He taught, for it contains the whole Christian faith in a single sentence, is the question he asked Peter: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" How full of meaning this question, and can we answer as did Peter: "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee!"

Love for the risen Saviour; implicit obedience to all his commands; faith and trust in him—this is genuine religion, and this we must have if we are His, if we would be among the saved in Heaven. Pray and work, trust and believe, and the blessed Spirit will always be around and about us to direct our erring footsteps, to keep us from falling into sin.

It is recorded of Demosthenes that when asked in what oratory consisted, he said: "Action! Action! Action!" In this reply he expressed a grand, an impressive truth, which will apply with as equal force to Christianity as to oratory. Action!—work!—love for Jesus and for fellowmen!—these are the first, second and third requisites of true godliness of character.

We should always remember that for success in our worldly business we are dependent upon God, and whenever we receive earthly blessings they are from Him, who openeth His hand and supplieth the wants of every living thing. The Psalmist said: "Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him and He will bring it to pass" that is, accomplish in the best way, the most desirable ends for our temporal and spiritual welfare.

But one of the hardest things to do is that here indicated by the Psalmist; and to do this, trust and faith in the Saviour are required, and much earnest, heartfelt prayer. We are not only to commit ourselves, soul and body, property and possessions, but what we do—our work, whether it be done by hand or purse or in whatever way—into His hands. We are to wait commit ourselves unto the Lord, and in his own good time he will bring those things to pass that will be best and most desirable for us.—Christian Observer.

"A Horrible Doctrine"

BY REV. C. H. MURRAY.

Very frequently, when people hear it said that the final punishment will forever suffer, they exclaim: "What a horrible doctrine that is!" And they emphatically declare that they will not believe it. They say that they are sure that God is altogether too good to permit any one to suffer forever. Concerning these things, let me say a few words. In the first place, I admit that such a doctrine is a horrible one. I am obliged to admit it, for the Bible plainly indicates that it is not merely a horrible doctrine, but a horrible truth. And I do remember that even God himself can not change this truth; he can not convert it into something else, so that it will not be true. God can not add two units, and make them count five. He can not alter mathematical truth a particle. If a sinner will continue in his sins until the day of his death, until his expiring breath, all the while refusing to accept the offer of salvation, God can not prevent that man from suffering forever. No, positively, he can not. That man will carry his sinfulness with him into the world of spirits, and of kindred spirits, and his own sins will cause him to suffer as he shall exist, which will be forever; and God can not help such a thing.

Yes, it is indeed a horrible doctrine, and that is one great reason why Christ wept over sinners, and so urgently warned them of their danger, and pleaded with them to escape the fearful doom of the ungodly. And Christ did not quit feeling mightily concerned for sinners when he left this world, for after he went back to heaven he put it into the minds of the men whom he chose to write the epistles, to write in them the most earnest and arousing warnings that human language could convey, telling every sinner that could be reached that a horrible experience awaited those who should die in their sins. Read the vigorous and burning warnings which Paul wrote. Read also the alarming words of Peter. These men, as well as other New Testament writers, were painfully aware of the horribleness of the truth that they who die in their sins shall forever be tormented by the company of their sins. Many, in this world, suffer on account of their sins, from their youth to their old age; and this is but the beginning of an eternal hell. Sinner, the best thing that you can do is to apply to Christ at once for a complete pardon of your sins, and then you will be ready both to live and to die.—Journal and Messenger.

How Christ Renews Manhood.

Christ said, "Make the tree good, and proceeds to do it. And how does he do it?"

He does it by coming to us; to every soul of man on the earth, and offering, first, forgiveness for all the past. I do not know that, amongst all the bonds by which evil holds a poor soul that struggles to get away from it, there is one more adamant and unyielding than the consciousness that the past is irrevocable, and that "what I have written I have written," and never can blot it out. But Jesus Christ deals with that. It is true that "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap," and the Christian doctrine of forgiveness does not contradict that solemn truth; but it assures us that God's heart is not turned away from us, notwithstanding the past; and that we can write the future better, and break altogether the fatal bond that decrees, apart from him, that to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant; and that past sin shall beget a progeny of future one. That is at an end, if we take Christ for our Saviour. He makes the tree good in another position still; for the very center, as it

seems to me, of the gospel of Jesus Christ is that into the spirit he will breathe a new life kindred with his own, a new nature which is free from the law and bonds of past sin and of present and future death. The tree is made good because he makes those who believe in him new creatures in Christ Jesus. Now do not turn away and say that that is mysticism. Be it mysticism or not, it is God's truth. It is the truth of the Christian religion, that with in Jesus Christ a new nature into any man, however sinful he may have been, and however deep the marks of the fetter may have been upon his limbs.

Christ makes the tree good yet another fashion, because he gives to the reinforcement of the new life which he imparts the mightiest motives, and sways by love, which leads to imitation of the Beloved which leads to obedience to the loved, which leads to shunning as a worst of evils anything that would break the communion with the Beloved and which is in itself the decentering of the sinful soul from its old center, and the making of Christ the Beloved the center round which moves, from which it draws radiance and motion. By all these methods, and many more that I cannot do upon now, the problem is triumphantly solved by Christianity. There is made good, and "instead of briars shall come up the myrtle."—Alexander McLaren.

Remember, the joy of Holy Ghost is the joy of working for God.—Rev. Andrew Murray.

A Sublime Reality.

"About ten years ago," says Rev. L. W. Munhall, "I was holding services in a populous town. I was told that the most prominent business man there was an infidel. He was man of intelligence and morality but a very pronounced opponent of religion, who missed no opportunity of denouncing Christianity and its professors. To our surprise, he ended the first meeting in the Presbyterian church. We soon found, however, that he came to seek."

"The sermon that night was the heinousness of sin. He was away seriously thoughtful. He the next night. I preached on God's remedy for sin. He remained pray, and went home a saved man. He closed his place of business for two weeks I remained in the place and visited every house in the town, and apologized to the people for having ever advocated infidel views assured them that the religion Jesus Christ was a sublime reality. He told them of his own conversion, and urged every one to attend the meetings. Many came on his invitation, and were saved. He lived seven years after the time, and during those years steadfastly maintained his Christian profession. His funeral was largely attended, and there were many testimonies to the consistency of his Christian character and the earnestness with which he strove to witness for Christ."

"BALM OF HURT WOUNDS, speaks of shake-speak terms sleep, but stated breathing tubes prevent sleep through desire to cough. Balsam of same word as balm, and the balm of Gilead is Adamson's Balm of Gilead Balsam. 25c. all Druggists.

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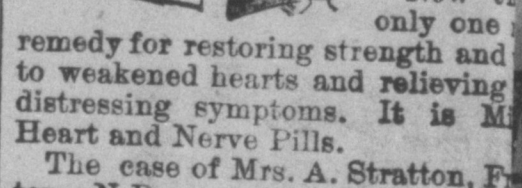
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