

Sunday Reading.

New Year's Wishes.

What shall I wish thee?
Treasurers of earth?
Songs in the spring-time,
Pleasure or mirth?
Flowers on thy pathway,
Skies ever clear?
Would this ensure thee
A Happy New Year?

What shall I wish thee?
What can be found
Bringing thee sunshine
All the year round?
Where is the treasure,
Lasting and dear,
That shall ensure thee
A Happy New Year?

Faith that increaseth,
Walking in light;
Hope that aboundeth,
Happy and bright;
Love that is perfect,
Casting out fear—
These shall ensure thee
A Happy New Year.

Peace in the Saviour,
Rest at his feet;
Smile of his countenance
Radiant and sweet;
Joy in his presence,
Christ ever near—
These will ensure thee
A Happy New Year.

—Frances R. Havergal.

Heaven, and how to get there.

BY NEWMAN HALL, D. D.

All mankind may be classified as the quick and dead: those who are dead and have passed away, and those who are still alive upon the earth. Our Lord when He comes, will judge the quick and the dead. "We shall not all die, but we shall all be changed." The quick—the living ones—will enjoy the great privilege not to die. But the great majority of mankind are under the class of the dead. Now Moses and Elias are examples of these two classes, Moses represents the dead. We are told that God buried him, and his sepulchre was not known; but we are surely not to infer that he did not die. There was good reason why his sepulchre should be hidden. Some of you have been in Roman Catholic countries on the continent of Europe, and you have seen bits of bones enclosed in cases in different churches—subdivisions of apostles and prophets, perhaps more bones of one saint than ever existed in one human living body; and you have seen people bowing before those relics, paying adoration, looking very much like idolatry; and this in Christendom! The Israelites were prone to idolatry. Even when God appeared upon Sinai they were worshipping the golden calf. Now if they had found the body of Moses, especially in a time when they were degenerated, would not they have distributed those relics all over the land? Would not every synagogue have had those relics of one of the greatest men, if not the greatest man, that ever lived? To avoid this, God buried him, and no one could tell where his sepulchre was. But he was buried, and he represents the dead. Now Elias represents the quick, he did not die, but was translated. He was changed, and went into glory without the medium of the grave. Both of these men are here, Moses and Elias; and the point to observe is this: that Moses, who died, whose body was left in the earth, is exactly in the same circumstances and enjoying the very same privileges as Elias, who did not die at all, but who went to heaven in that chariot of fire.

And so we may learn what is the present condition of departed saints. We may look on all those whose bodies are in the grave as represented by Moses; and inasmuch as Moses shared with Elias, we have reason to hope that those who have died and whose bodies are in the grave share with those who have never died at all. We may learn from the simple facts of the text:

I. THE CONSCIOUS EXISTENCE OF DEPARTED SAINTS. They have left us, but they have not ceased to be. They do not sleep in cold unconsciousness; there is no long interval of being; there are no ages of slumber till the trumpet of the resurrection shall sound. Moses, the dead one, is consciously existing along with Elias, who never ceased to live. If we had been with Elias when Elias was caught up into

glory, we should not have returned to our dwelling and put on mourning and lamented that Elias was dead. Elisha went back triumphing in the thought that the prophet and the friend and the father whom he loved was in conscious existence still. Though the sunken cheek and the unresponsive eye, and the hand that no longer clasps our own speak to us of death, yet we may be as well assured that our departed friends still live, as if we had seen an angelic convoy taking them to glory, even as Moses no less than Elias appeared with Jesus on the Mount.

And we may learn, secondly, that they are in glory. "There talked with him two men, Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory." Though the resurrection is the climax of the glory of the saints, yet they enter into glory as soon as they depart out of this world. Elias was translated, and Moses also passed at once into glory. And so it is with the saints who worship the same God as Moses: when they die they go into the glory into which Moses went, which was the same as that of Elias. Let us think of them, therefore, as translated rather than as dead; as those for whom the conflict has ceased in the festival of the victor; as those whose toilsome pilgrimage has ended in the peaceful rest of home.

We may learn, thirdly, the possible nearness of departed saints. Moses and Elias appeared upon a certain mountain in Palestine, in immediate neighborhood to the scenes with which they had been familiar on earth. Are those who were once so very near us, so indefinitely, so infinitely distant as some seem to think? May they not sometimes revisit, unseen by us, the places where once they dwelt? May they not sometimes be very near us, though we cannot hear their voice or feel their hand, even as angels are ministering spirits to the saints?

A fourth suggestion is that the departed are together. Moses and Elias were together, though five hundred years divided them when on earth. They had different work to do, at different times. God's servants are placed in different localities: they may be living at the same time, but they may never be able to meet with one another, or, as in this case, they may be living in the same place, but at different epochs. But they are together yonder. As Moses and Elias, though they did not meet on earth, met in glory, so Enoch and Paul, Noah and John, Abraham and James, David, Daniel, the apostles, the martyrs are all together.

We may also learn that there is surely recognition of departed saints. How great a portion of the happiness of this world arises from intimate and tender affection! How closely hearts are bound to hearts, so that another's life is dearer than one's own. Is all this to cease at death?

We are not told, "there appeared two unknown glorified beings," but here are two specific persons: Moses is one of them and Elias is the other. We do not know how the apostles were informed who they were; perhaps by the intuition which we may possess by and by, with no need to be introduced to one another by name. And so we may believe there is recognition yonder. God loves diversity. He has not made two leaves on the same tree exactly alike. Some persons would improve upon the divine arrangement: they would have us all frozen into an icebound uniformity, as Milton somewhere expresses it. Let us rejoice in the diversities of manifestation of the love of our Lord. Oh, the bliss of renewing intercourse with the dear ones that have gone before us! there where no infirmity will remain; no possibility of misunderstanding; nothing to jar the perfect harmony, and where we shall not fear the entrance of death to sunder us again.

Another idea is, that departed saints are with Jesus. Moses and Elias were with Jesus. This is the chief joy of believers now. There is no joy comparable to this conscious presence of Christ on earth, and it will be the chief joy hereafter. "I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am," Jesus said to the dying thief, "This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." The apostle said: "Having a desire to depart and be with Jesus, which is far better"; "absent from the body" and, with no interval, "present with the Lord." Oh, to behold the

glorified body of Jesus—that same Jesus—who went up to heaven in the presence of the apostles—bearing still the wound-prints in His hands and in His side, whom here we have seen but through a mist, obscurely, yet have loved and served, though imperfectly—to be in His very presence, to meet His eye and to hear His voice! "In His presence there is fullness of joy and pleasure forever more." We see Him now by faith; our departed ones see face to face, as Moses no less than Elias was with Him in glory.

Such are the glimpses which we obtain of the condition of the blessed dead, from the simple statement that there appeared two men, Moses and Elias, in glory with Jesus.

And now comes the question: How to get there. The character of Moses and Elias instructs us. God is a God of order. Every one goes to the sphere for which he is fitted. Judas went "to his own place." The saints go to holy heaven, and those who participate substantially in the character of Moses and Elias will go where Moses and Elias are. Moses by faith renounced the pleasures of sin and the luxuries of the world, that he might share with God's own people, preferring to be poor, despised and oppressed with the godly, than to have any amount of sinful pleasure with those who knew not God; and so he came out from the world and was separate. Are we like that? Are we willing to renounce the world, sinful pleasures and frivolities? Are we willing to ally ourselves with the Church of God, not when it is numerous, respectable, affluent and great, but also and equally when poor and oppressed? Are we aiding it according to our degree and position; actually coming out from the world, and rejoicing that God numbers us among His sons and daughters? If so, we are on the way to meet Moses, for we are like him.

Look at Elias. He was remarkable for his decision. We cannot resemble him as a great and illustrious prophet; but if we would join him we must resemble him in decision. "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; and if Baal, follow him." Are we decided? Have we made up our minds by God's grace, that, whatever others do, we will serve the Lord? If so, we are on the way to join Elias. But if we are halting between two opinions. You must be altered. "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." If we are sharers with Moses and Elias in decision for God and godliness, we are on our way to join them; and if otherwise, we have as yet no hope.

The third of this wonderful company was Jesus. It was supposed that He had come to set aside the authority of Moses and the prophets, because He put on one side many false interpretations current amongst the scribes, because He taught many things that Moses and the prophets had not taught, and because He came, by the sacrifice of Himself, to supersede and set aside the emblematical sacrifices and ceremonies of the Old Testament dispensation. But He said: "Think not that I have come to destroy the Law and the Prophets; I have not come to destroy, but to fulfill." If He had come to destroy Moses and the Prophets, would Moses and Elias have been in friendly conversation with their destroyer? The fact that they were together was a most obvious sign to the disciples of their perfect agreement. The Law and the Gospel are but parts of the one great whole: if the Law tells us our disease, the Gospel tells us of our remedy; if the one convinces of sin, the other whispers of pardon; if the one provokes the inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" the other says, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The mission of Jesus was foreshadowed in almost every ceremony of the law, and in almost every prediction of the prophets: the lamb slain morning and evening, the high-priest entering once a year into the most holy place, the scapegoat, the blood of the passover—all these were types of Christ.

Thus the mission of Jesus, as a whole, was adumbrated by Moses and the prophets; but was there anything special about the mission of Christ to which they specially pointed? Listen: what is the theme of their conversation? Events that had transpired in heaven

since our Lord's incarnation? The glorious triumph preparing for Him when He should resume His throne? No: they "spoke of the decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." What! That countenance, shining as the sun, suggestive of the countenance furrowed with grief? That crown of radiance, of the crown of thorns? The two saints, the two thieves? The voice of the Father's approval, of the bitter cry, "My God! my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

What a difference between their decease and the decease of Jesus! Elias, caught up into glory: Moses falling asleep in the arms of God. Why their's so blessed? because His was so grievous. He bore their sins in His own body on the tree.

Was it not the event to which our Lord Himself would be most likely to refer? It was of supreme interest to Him. He was the Lamb slain for the foundation of the world. He said, "I delight to do thy will, O God"; and that was the will of God. Angels had intently been interested in the great work of Christ's atonement. They were at His birth, temptation, crucifixion; "which things the angels desire to look into." Much more must that event have been of deep interest to Jesus himself. He came for the salvation of the world, to seek and to save the lost by dying.

No wonder, then, that they should speak of such a theme. Their conversation was responded to from the heavenly glory, for the voice of the Father was heard: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

The question again recurs, respecting heaven: "How to get there?" By trusting in that atonement, by relying on that decease, by pleading the merits of that Savior, by clinging to that cross. Rejoice in this salvation. And then, brethren our death will only be our decease, our departure from this life into the better life, our going out from God's gracious presence here to the fuller manifestations of it yonder.

O Lord, help us to behold Thee dying for us on the cross: nay, rather help us to behold Thee as now transfigured in glory. And so, habitually dwelling upon the thought of Thy great love, Thy presence and Thy glory, may we be able to say, in all places and in all conditions, "Lord, it is good for us to be here."

A Dream, on New Year's Eve.

It was the last night of the old year, and very quietly was it fading into the dimness of the past, linking itself to the three hundred and sixty-four already numbered and finished; another round of life nearly accomplished, and with its hopes and memories, joys and troubles, almost ready to drop into the grave of the years.

Clara Porter had returned from church that evening, and, after giving her dainty bat to a toss upon the piano, and laying her fur-lined circular in a most discontented heap by its side, she threw herself, the most discontented of all into the embrace of a cosy arm-chair, which offered the plump little figure all the comfort it possessed. That something disturbed the young lady's mind was very evident, for she sat a long time pulling out of all comeliness the delicate gloves in her hands, while her thoughts, far from being on kids intent, ran thus:

"I do wish Mr. Lincoln would not preach such matter-of-fact sermons. The idea of reminding everybody of every word they have spoken. Every thought, every promise made, broken or forgotten, and parading one's faults before the whole congregation. Why, I should think I had broken every one of the ten commandments by the way his keen eyes flashed over to our pew! I should think I had never been at church, or Sunday-school, or prayer-meeting, in my life; had never given a thought to the Lord, or a cent into the contribution box."

His text was a strange one, but in perfect keeping with what followed. "There hath not failed one word of all his good promise." Of course we have been fed and clothed, we all know that—but I'll go to bed and sleep off these unpleasant impressions. I must be bright and brilliant to receive to-morrow. My new suit is a beauty, and I hope my order for flowers will not be forgot-

ten, or—but the opening door and entrance of a slender figure cut short the sentence, and almost hushed the heart-beats in her bosom. The face was full of emotion and appeal as the large, earnest eyes seemed to look Clara through and through.

"I was full of hope and anticipation," spoke a sweet voice, "when the past year was ushered in. I heard your vow to begin the New Year as a Christian; I carried the vow to heaven and saw it registered. How long and sadly I have waited, and in vain. I have seen written over against the message I so joyfully conveyed, 'Thirty-one days of grace and opportunities wasted'; and drawing her snowy draperies about her, the visitor turned tearfully away.

Before the door was shut, another figure stood before Clara's chair, holding out her hands entreatingly. "I, too, have watched the fleeting days, and the gradual forgetfulness of your solemn promise, and on the same record have been added, 'Twenty-eight days of mercy unappropriated,' and then this second figure turned mournfully from the room."

A third stepped up to the astonished girl whose resolute face showed a nature not easily discouraged, but now bearing traces of keenest regret. "I saw you when you refused the gentle pleadings of the Spirit, and turned away from the open door upon whose threshold you were standing, and saw the recording angel number three months of wasted time."

"I was close by your bedside," spoke another voice, "when during a weary illness, you looked back with tears, and repentantly forward, and the misty veil which enveloped this little figure seemed one of the tears to the bewildered Clara."

The room seemed peopled with symbolic figures. Here was one with her hands full of trailing vines of tender green, and delicate sprays of the sweet arbutus; another wreathed with roses and budding blossoms. Then came two crowned with sea shells of wonderful lights and tints, and tiny globes of pearls which no human skill could imitate; they reminded her of the spring-time and summer-wasted, the forgotten nearness to the unseen and eternal world, and the reckless indulgence of pleasures to stifle the whisperings of conscience.

Still another, with fleecy robes embroidered with silken corn tassels, and holding the full ear in her hand, suggested the ripening harvest, while a companion with a coronet of scarlet and gold sadly uttered these words: "Nothing but leaves; no garnered sheaves. Of life's fair ripened grain; Words, idle words, for earnest deeds; You sow your seeds, lo! tares and weeds; And reap with toil and pain Nothing but leaves."

Two more figures came still closer to Clara, as she lay back in her chair, her breath coming in gasps, and her whole soul alive to the meaning of this strange procession of the year just going from her forever. Serious of face was one, and her loose robe was of indescribable sable, as sad of hue as the face above it, and these were the only words she said:

Rare opportunities were yours, Brought by each swiftly gliding day; Such lavish gifts of godlike powers, Such potent means—the opening way; If this is now the bitter tear, Blame not the bounteous, dying Year."

The last of the twelve held in her hand an hour-glass, but not a word passed the firmly closed lips as she pointed to the sands almost run out. Her look, her whole attitude were enough to inspire the most indifferent with a feeling of deep solemnity and awe.

Clara could bear no more; she dropped her gloves, and tried to seize the prophetic glass that told the story of wasted months. January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, and December stood before her in reproving array; going and taking with them a diary of her life, its promises made and never kept, her selfish use of lent time, and abuse of heavenly gifts. She tried to cry out for a respite, a moment longer, when she opened her eyes and found herself in her comfortable room, her hat and circular just where she had tossed them, and the little French clock pointing to eleven. She had been dreaming an hour, and what a feeling of thankfulness she experienced when she found she had yet sixty minutes left of the wasted year. The "matter-of-fact" pastor was probably sleeping the sleep of the just, when before the hands of the clock pointed at twelve, a truly awakened and repentant heart awoke, and found forgiveness, while the birth of the new year was, also, the date of a spiritual birthday for one he had often prayed for.

"There hath not failed one word of all his good promise,"—Zion's Advocate.

Was John Milton a Baptist?

Not long ago we heard a Congregational minister, speaking in a Baptist church, coolly claim Milton as a member of his denomination, while he tried to console Baptists by mentioning John Bunyan as their great standard-bearer.

The fact is, that Milton and Bunyan, were both Baptists. If they were Congregationalists at all it was only as all Baptists are Congregationalists. A Pedobaptist Congregationalist was either the one or the other, and Milton was just as far from Pedobaptism as was Bunyan. In fact he held more nearly to distinctive Baptist principles than did Bunyan. Our readers may be interested by the following citations from Milton's writings: "Under the gospel, the first of the sacraments, commonly so called is Baptism, wherein the bodies of believers, who engage themselves to pureness of life, are immersed in running water, to signify their regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and their union with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection."

After quoting Matt. 28: 19, Mark 16: 15, 16, Acts 8: 36, 37, Eph. 5: 26, and 1 Pet. 3: 21, he proceeds:—"Hence it follows that infants are not to be baptized, inasmuch as they are incompetent to receive instruction, or to believe, or to enter into a covenant, or to promise or answer for themselves, or even to hear the word, for how can infants, who understand not the word, be purified thereby; any more than adults can receive edification by hearing an unknown language? For it is not the outward baptism, which purifies only the filth of the flesh, that saves us, but the answer of a good conscience, as Peter testifies; of which infants are incapable. Besides, baptism is not merely a covenant, containing a certain stipulation on your side, with a corresponding engagement on the other, which in the case of an infant is impossible; but it is also a vow, and as such can neither be pronounced by infants, nor required of them."

A masterly refutation of the arguments by which infant baptism was defended in his time follows. A more convincing presentation of the case has rarely been presented than Milton's.

As regards immersion he writes: "It is in vain alleged by those who, on the authority of Mark 7: 4, Luke 11: 38, have introduced the practice of affusion in baptism instead of immersion, that to dip and to sprinkle mean the same thing; since in washing we do not sprinkle the hands, but immerse them."

As regards church government Milton was at one with Baptist and Pedobaptist Congregationalists. In the matter of liberty of conscience he went as far as Roger Williams and the Baptists, and further than did most Pedobaptist Congregationalists of his time. Would that all Congregationalists were such as this John Milton in the matter of Christian ordinances.

Milton's position is the only Scriptural position, and the only position that a Congregationalist can consistently hold.

It may be worth while to state that these views of Milton are found in his 'Treatise on Christian Doctrine, long supposed to be lost, but discovered and edited in 1823 in the original Latin and published in an English translation, edited with notes by Charles R. Sumner in 1825. A copy of this book, which is now somewhat rare, has just been secured for the Library of Toronto Baptist College.—Canadian Baptist.

The Religious Newspaper.

The Religious Newspaper has taken a decided and well defined place in current literature and Church agencies. At the present time when periodical literature is so potent an influence in forming opinion, and awakening interest in all departments of thought and action, any church that fails to use the press as a means of propagating its views of truth and promoting its work, neglects a powerful auxiliary to success. The main purpose of a religious newspaper is to supply sound instructive reading, presenting right views of life and duty. In all questions as to what Christian people should believe and do the religious paper should give forth a certain sound, and exercise a commanding influence. We consider this the chief function of such a paper, in view