

THE NEW YEAR.

Thanks for mercies past receive, Pardon our sins renew; Teach us henceforth how to live With eternity in view.

The opening year Thy mercy shows: Let mercy crown it till it close.

With grateful hearts the past we own: The future, all to us unknown, We to Thy guardian care commit, And peaceful leave before Thy feet.

Eternal Source of every joy, Well may Thy praise our lips employ, While in Thy temple we appear, To hail Thee, Sovereign of the year.

The year rolls round and steals away The breath that first it gave; Whatever we do, wherever we be We're hastening to the grave.

Time is short! Ye saints rejoice, The Lord will quickly come; Soon shall you hear the Bridegroom's voice To call you to your home.

Let me improve the hours I have Before the day of grace is fled; There's no repentance in the grave, Nor pardon offered to the dead.

My days, my weeks, my months, my years, Fly rapid as the whirling spheres Around the steadfast pole; Time like the tide its motion keeps Till I must launch through boundless deeps, Where endless ages roll.

"For a thousand years in thy sight Are but as yesterday when it is past, And as a watch in the night."

"We bring our years to an end as a tale that is told. The days of our years are three score years and ten."

Or if by reason of strength fourscore years: Yet is their pride but labour and sorrow: For it is soon gone, and we fly away.

Another year hath fled; renew, Lord, with our days, Thy love! Our days are evil here and few; We look to live above: We will not grieve, though day by day We pass from earthly joys away; Our joy abides in Thee.

For all the future, Lord, prepare Our souls with strength divine; Help us to cast on Thee our care, And on Thy servants' shine; Life without Thee is dark and drear; Death is not death if Thou art near; Our life abides in Thee.

Nor deem the irrevocable Past As wholly wasted, wholly vain, If rising from its wrecks at last, To something nobler we attain.

There are no birds in last year's nest.

When time must end, eternity Begin, -and cannot I compute, Weigh loss and gain together, suit My actions to the balance drawn, And give my body to be sawn Asunder, racked in pieces, tied To horses; stoned, burned, crucified, Like any martyr of the list? How gladly! -if I made acquit, Through the brief minutes' fierce annoy, Of God's eternity of joy.

Great God, Thou art the flowing spring of light, Enrich mine eyes with Thy refulgent ray, Thou art my path, direct my steps aright, I have no other light, no other way, Through all my years I'll trust Him and pursue, His law shall be my path, His heavenly light my clue.

A NEW YEAR'S THOUGHT.

BY M. E. WINSLOW.

Most of us have commenced the year 1887 with new purposes, new resolutions, or, at least, new thoughts, with reference to the twelve months lying just before us. Meetings have been held, consecrations made, vows registered. How many vows will be kept? How many consecrations preserved inviolate? It is safe to say that those who do not begin to keep their New Year's resolutions with the first hours of the New Year, will never find that more convenient season for which they are waiting. Among our New Year's gifts was a Shakespearean Calendar, on to-day's leaf of which is printed: "Eight days past; three hundred and fifty-seven days to come." It is a novel way of looking at the new year, and yet it is a helpful one. There are only so many days left, and each of those days is already pre-empted to its own share of duty and responsibility, and has no vacant corner in which to squeeze the neglected ones of the first eight. What is not done in its time and place, will go undone to all eternity. You mean to be more entirely consecrated to the service of God this year than ever before; are you so to-day? To give more of time, money and personal service, have you given them yet? To make more of your opportunities; have you made the most of those of this one week?

There is a tendency to feel at the beginning of the year that there is illimitable time before us, and because there is, to put off beginning what we fully intend to do, till we wake up suddenly to find the golden days slipping away, and to realize that there are only a few of them—so few, that we can never do the intended thing at all. Might it not be well for us all to say to ourselves each morning, "There are only so many days left of this year?"

But the sweetest New Year's thought is, after all, that which was the key-note of a consecration meeting held the first day of the year: "I dwell with the King for His work."

If the King's house be indeed our dwelling, not a place of occasional visitation, we have little need for resolutions, consecrations, and vows. For there are two sides of that ideal of life, and the two taken together

make up that most perfect of all natural forms, a sphere.

A great preacher recently said that the logos, the word and thought of God toward a fallen race, is simply Emmanuel—God with us. Christ, God in man as redemption; the Holy Spirit, God in man for sanctification; God in providence for us, God in battle with us. It is well to know that we dwell with the King, but better still to remember that the King dwells with us. For the latter proposition is the foundation and efficient cause of the former. God always takes the initiative; "we love Him because He first loved us;" we dwell with the King because of His own sovereign good-will; He is Emmanuel, God with us.

Do you ask further: How shall we dwell with the King through all the untold hours of 1887? The answer is in the words of St. Paul: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith," which is another way of saying, we live in Christ when we believe that he lives in us. Simple, is it not? Simple as the A. B. C. of the new year; and like those mysterious little characters, capable of all the permutations possible to the sorrows, the experiences, the exigencies, of its three hundred and sixty-five days.

Suffer, then, the word of exhortation, O Beloved! Cease from struggles after states and emotions, consecrations and self-immolations, and for this one year, at least, see how sweet it is simply to believe in Emmanuel. So shall you through all its days and hours "dwell with the King," and dwell there "for His work." Not your work, but His; and His work is always a variation on the little word "Come." "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good;" "Come see a man;" "Come, for He calleth thee;" "Come, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden;" "Come, for all things are now ready;" "Come to Jesus."

Sweet, easy word to say, and capable of infinite expansion in the saying. Whether said in the pulpit or on paper, or acted in the homely details of daily life, it is still the saying of this "Come" which constitutes the "work" for which we dwell with the King.

Be up and doing, then, in these early hours of 1887. There are only —days left in which to say that beautiful word "Come;" but there is all eternity in which to realize the glorious truth of Emmanuel.—L. Herald.

PRACTICAL RELIGION.

BY REV. T. L. CUYLER.

Giving up sinful practices or pleasures—or even questionable ones—is not enough. Such negative religion will not last long, or avail much. Genuine piety is a positive thing; it is doing right, it is keeping Christ's commandments. Pulling up weeds does not make a garden in the bright May days. Mellowing the earth and dropping the seeds, and setting out the young plants, is the only substantial way to do it. When the soil is busy growing vegetables and flowers there is little space left for weeds. Less than half your religion depends on the "thou shalt not's." Christ did not say to Matthew "Thou shalt stay here at the toll-booth, and try to keep out of cheating and other evil practices of the publicans." He said, "Follow me," and then Matthew goes at once into a new line of conduct, and a new life.

Begin at once to do whatever your Master commands. Begin to practice religion. A child never would learn to walk by a hundred talks about the law of gravitation; it must use its own feet, even at the risk of many a tumble. Wait not for more feeling, or more pungent convictions, or for anything that you read in of in other people's experience. These are all snarls and hindrances, if they keep you from doing at once the very first act that will please Christ. Have you never opened your lips to an unconverted friend, either to avow your own feelings or to do that friend some good? Then try it; you will strengthen yourself, and may bring an unexpected blessing to him or her. In short, you must begin to obey a new Master; to serve a new Saviour; to strike out a new line of living, and rely on God's almighty help to do it. When you give yourself to Christ in this whole-hearted and practical fashion, he will give you a thousandfold richer gifts in return. Yea, he will give you himself! When you possess Christ you have everything.

"No man," says *The Independent*, "is fit to be a preacher of the Gospel whose head and heart are not completely anchored in the Bible. This is the very first quality of a good preacher. One may be eloquent and attractive without this quality, but a good preacher he can not be."

HOW A FAMOUS TRACT WAS WRITTEN.

Rev. Newman Hall's tract, "Come to Jesus," which has been translated into over a hundred languages and almost universally circulated, was written under these circumstances, related by Mr Hall himself: "I remember when I was in Hull, that every year, after the London missionary anniversary, a very worthy citizen—a Scotchman he was—used to dine all those who took part in it; and after the dinner the hospitable Scot set out the table with long pipes and whisky toddy. Now, I am not going to say a word about this—all was done with the utmost decorum; but I was a T. T., and didn't like the smell of tobacco-smoke. So I whispered to an neighbor like-minded, "Let's go out to the slums for half an hour and preach;" and we were there in five minutes. Of course we borrowed a chair, and I got on it without thinking much about the text; but all around were children, and the fathers and mothers of them, and he said, "Come to Jesus," and sung it, too. Now, these were some of my heads. What is meant by coming? Why ought we to come? Am I worthy to come? How am I to come? Who are to come? And when I got down I said to myself, "That's a strange sort of a sermon; but I'll preach it from the pulpit next Sunday." And I did. There were thirty heads in it; but I did not go at it by first, second, etc. Just then I had rheumatic fever, and it brought me down to a skeleton,—I was getting better and then relapsed,—so I went home to Maidstone for a change of air. As I lay there tied to the bed I began thinking about my sermon and its thirty heads. I thought, now if I fold paper so and so, and so and so, that would give just sixty-four pages; and if I take two pages for every head, with a title-page, a hymn or so, that would just do. So I began to write my book, hoping it might suit, like "The Sinner's Friend," written by my father. I wrote out the first, and counting the lines found it was just twice the right length; so it had to be rewritten, pruned, and all the big words taken out. And so I went on day by day, and by the time the book was finished, my health was reinstated. Well I got it printed down there, and put a publisher's name on it,—you know you must do that,—and I ventured to order 2,000. I thought I might sell one and give the other away. But what do you think the publishers wrote to me? "We want 10,000 of Come to Jesus, at once;" and so the sale went on, so that now I believe three millions of it have been printed; and it has been translated into a hundred languages and more, I believe. Now, have I not good reason to thank God for open-air preaching?"

A CHRISTIAN HEROINE.

A slight, graceful girl, with a sweet, winning face, stepped forward to address us at a recent missionary meeting. She was about to return to her adopted home in Utah, where she has been for four years, and this, she said, was her "first vacation." Soon after she was graduated from school she entered upon her Master's work, and has kept on her way bravely and cheerfully ever since.

The only alien in that wretched Mormon village, she goes about like her blessed Lord, trying to seek and to save that which was lost. In summer's heat and winter's cold she is visiting these poor abodes of sin and suffering, and gathering into her own little dwelling as many children as will come. She teaches them day and night, giving herself little rest; and although exposed to insult and great discouragement, yet the Master whom she serves is helping her, and she is blest; souls are converted, and her influence for good is increasing.

As I listened to this dear young servant of Christ, I thought what a sacrifice, and what an honor! Would I be willing that my own daughter should go and do likewise? Mothers, could you cheerfully give up yours for such a service as this? But what earthly honor or social estate can compare with that which this brave young disciple has chosen, who renouncing all worldly good, has joyfully, lovingly devoted herself a willing sacrifice to Him who gave his life for her, and for us all?—Observer.

SELF-DENIAL.

Christ died to save us, but his death will not avail for us unless we also learn the lesson of self-denial and suffering for others. We are apt to look at Christ as our exemplar in goodness, but to forget that we are especially called to follow him in suffering. We expect the crown, but forget that it must be reached through the cross. "If we suffer, he shall reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us."—Cumberland Presbyterian.

HOLINESS.

There are a great many theories propounded by divines on the subject of Christian holiness. It would not, perhaps, be very profitable to spend much time in attempting to either sustain or overthrow many of them. Without any special regard to them, the great truth stands out clearly in the Bible, undenied and incontrovertible, that holiness of heart and life is the one essential condition of our salvation. "Without holiness," we are assured, "no man can see the Lord." There are evidently, however, different degrees in holiness. Every true Christian is in some degree holy. Every operation of the divine Spirit on the human heart is a holy operation, and just so far as the work of grace is effected in the heart of the believer, through the influence of the divine Spirit, to the same extent he is holy. The apostle exhorts us to submit ourselves unto God—to commit ourselves into his hand. If this submission of the heart to God be gradual, our confidence in him waxing stronger and stronger, and our submission to him becoming greater and greater, our advancement in holiness will also be gradual, and in the very same degree. But if the heart be instantly and entirely submitted to the influence of divine grace, in the very same manner and to the very same extent will the individual become holy and conformed to the will of God. But as the work of grace in the hearts of believers admits of various degrees, so does their holiness correspond to the different steps in the advancement of this work from its beginning until its final completion. Hence the apostle speaks of some who are weak in the faith, and of others who are strong, and exhorts those who are strong to bear the infirmities of the weak. Some Christians have attained to higher degrees in Christian holiness than others; but it is the duty of all to labor, as the apostle exhorts, "to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord"—to attain to the utmost possible conformity to the divine will. For this every Christian should sincerely labor, whether he reach the goal of his desire by gradual approaches or at a single bound. If he is sincere and faithful, and truly hungers and thirsts after righteousness, God will lead him by his Spirit in the right way. God's Spirit is the best teacher on this subject.—Recorder.

DEBT, DIRT, AND THE DEVIL.

"To keep debt, dirt and the devil out of my cottage," says Spurgeon, "had been my greatest wish ever since I set up housekeeping." Surely these form a trinity of evils that should be carefully guarded against. A man who is in debt is a slave, toiling to meet the demands of another. He can not call what he possesses his own. He had better a great deal have less, and "owe no man anything," according to the apostolic injunction, than to have large possessions for which he is responsible, but which in whole or in part belong to another. A man in debt is like a person overboard with a great rock, with which, by great exertions, he may reach the shore, but which, nevertheless, may sink him at any moment.

But whatever excuse may be made for men's going in debt, surely none can be offered for their living in dirt. Soap and water are cheap, and brushes and brooms are not very expensive. The late Rev. Dr. George Crown used to say: "There can be no religion without soap." Dirt and piety, like oil and water, will not mix. "Know ye not," says the apostle, "that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." Hence we are exhorted to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." True religion will make a man clean inside and out, in soul and in body. The "religion of dirt," both in its practical and philosophical forms, should be rejected. Cleanliness and piety go together. But it is easier to keep out of debt and dirt than it is to keep out of the clutches of the devil. He is a wily foe and assaults us by force and fraud, as a roaring lion, and as an angel of light, and we should beware of his devices. But, after all, he is a cowardly foe, and if we do not give place to him, but resist him, steadfast in faith, he will turn his tail and flee from us. Never reason with him, for he will deceive you. Never believe anything he says, for he is a liar from the beginning. Remember, then, that you can not be too careful to guard against debt, dirt and the devil.—Methodist Recorder.

Beautiful souls often get into plain bodies; but they cannot be hidden, and have a power all their own, the greater for the unconsciousness or the humility which gives it grace.—Louisa M. Alcott.

PRaise THE BOY.

It often costs me quite a struggle to do this simple duty; and when one does his simple duty, in spite of his temptation to do differently, he deserves credit for his doing. One has no need to live long in this world before finding out this truth. A bright little boy about two and a half years old recently showed that he apprehended it. He was on the eve of doing something that was very tempting to him.

"No, my son; you mustn't do that," said his father. The little fellow looked as if he would like to do it in spite of his father's prohibition; but he triumphed over his inclination, and answered resolutely: "All right, papa; I won't do it." There was no issue there, and the father turned to something else. The boy waited a minute, and then said in a tone of surprised inquiry: "Papa, why don't you tell me, That's a good boy?"

The father took the hint and said an encouraging word. Perhaps some other father may need the same hint, and may profit by the suggestion. It is not well to keep all kind words until our friends are dead, and then put them on the grave stones.

WITNESS-BEARING.

Men are saved by word and by example. One drives the nail and the other clinches it. To withhold experience is to hide the gift of God which he designs for the enlightenment and purifying of the world. Many a blessing is lost because it will not bear hiding. It grows impenetrable in the darkness, and hides itself from us as we have hidden it from others.

Brother, sister, tell your experience. Tell it to your next-door neighbour, to the church, to the world. Tell the perishing what Jesus has done for your poor soul. Tell how sweetly He saves you, how completely He keeps you, and with what hope He carries you onward. Speak of His "loving kindness, O how sweet!"

There is a prudence about confessing, but we will not dilate on that now. If the Lord has swept through your soul with the breezes of His love, and purified and adorned it with the graces of His Spirit, surely you are fitted for some humble place in the rainbow of His earthly glory. You say you are unworthy, and so you are. But it is not a question of worthiness; it is simply one of magnifying what God has done for you and in you. Your sanctified soul must be a beacon of promise, and your words a glowing invitation, and your life a holy inspiration to lead the unsaved and unsanctified to Jesus. Hide your head if you must, while you speak, but fail not to hold up the Crucified and the Holy One to the world.—Dr. W. Arnot.

JESUS AS OUR ADVOCATE.

How blessed it is to know that we have the Lord Jesus as our advocate with God! The best of men feel the need of some one to plead for them at the court of infinite holiness. If God be just, they know there is no hope for them. It is this longing for advocate in heaven, which has led men to pray to the Virgin, and to appeal to the glorified saints to join with them in their entreaties to God. But all this is entirely unnecessary, and, indeed, an insult to Jesus. With our blessed Lord himself to represent and plead for us, we have no need of any one beside. Let us ever gratefully remember that the Saviour, who died for us, and who is full of profoundest sympathy with us, stands at the right hand of God on our behalf, and that trusting in his advocate, we are safe.—Our Young Folks.

GOD'S SIGHT MY SAFETY.

"When I see the blood I will pass over you." It is God's sight of the blood of his dear Son that is the everlasting safeguard of all who are in Christ. Though it is most precious and sweet to me to look at that blood once shed for many, for the remission of sins, and I do look at it; yet, if ever there should come a dark night to me in which I can not see it, still God will see it, and I am safe. I am saved because it is written, not "When you see it," but "When I see the blood I will pass over you." It is the perfection of the sacrifice, not your perfection of sight, which is your safeguard. It is the absence of all blemish from the sacrifice, not the absence of blemish from your faith, that makes you to be "accepted in the Beloved."—Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.

We cannot skip the seasons of our education. We cannot hasten the ripeness and the sweetness by a single day, nor dispense with one night's nipping frost, nor one weak's blighting east wind.—F. W. Robertson.

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