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REV. F. L. REID, Raleigh, N. C.

1891---The New Year.

What shall I make out of it? This is a question of practical importance. The year of 1890 has come and gone. Its sorrows are gone, its joys are gone, and its opportunities of doing good have passed away. As we stand on the margin of the new year, would it not be well to ask ourselves the question: Did I do as much last year as I might have done? Did I grow wiser in head, purer in heart, richer in good deeds? Take a retrospective view of the past, and try to count the blank days, the barren spots, the golden opportunities that slipped away unimproved. You see many, do you not? If so, are you going to let the same record be made during the year of 1891? How shall we make the present year yield a more bountiful harvest than the last year? A vital question.

All Christians are spiritual farmers. And he that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully. Take in more land to cultivate this year. Plow it better. Sow better seed and cultivate it more diligently, and a richer harvest will be reaped.

Christians are also called "the light of the world." Don't hide your candle under the bushel of indolence. Set it out in a conspicuous place, keep it closely trimmed and brightly burning, and let it so shine as to glorify God by leading sinners to Christ. We all have talents committed to us. Some have five, some two, some one. The command is: "Occupy till I come." Trade and traffic until I come. It is the business of all God's people to make the best possible use of all God has committed unto them. The key-note of success is *faithfulness*. Faithfulness, whether it be in a small or large sphere, whether it be the culture of one or five talents, is going to be crowned with the Master's smiling approval. Faithfulness in the smaller gifts prepares the way to a higher sphere. One seed well planted and cultivated multiplies itself into thirty or sixty. The mustard seed becomes a lofty tree with outspreading branches, bending with golden fruit. Every attainment of honor, wealth, knowledge, grace, helps to render further attainment more easy and assured. Every step, in climbing a rugged mountain, opens a wider and more attractive view. The further down the current of success one goes, the deeper the floating water and the swifter the stream bears on. It is well known that the careful use of any faculty will increase its power. The sailor uses much his eye, and so its vision becomes keener, quicker and more accurate. The blacksmith's arm grows in muscular strength and toughness in proportion to its use in wielding the massive hammer. The skill of the artist and musician becomes greater and grander by constant practice. And as we ascend the hill of Zion her attractive beauties widen. "The only way to enlarge our sphere is to fill to overflowing the sphere we are in."

On the other hand, the non-use of man's spiritual powers tends to dwarf and to extirpate them. The eyes of the fish in the dark river flowing in the Mammoth Cave, have entirely disappeared, because they ceased to use them. "I say unto you, that unto every one which hath

shall be given; and from him that hath not (does not improve) even that he hath shall be taken away."

Dickens has a curious story about the Skitzlanders, who were born with every limb perfect, but at a certain period of life, all unused parts of the body fell away, so that some of them were only "a head without heart," and others "a pair of eyes and bundle of nerves."

Keep working that you may keep from freezing. Look at that still pond of water—it is frozen over from side to side and still and silent as death. But look at that running stream, how it sings its rippling song, dances around the jutting rocks, sparkles in the sunbeams, and leaps upon the mill wheel and puts the stones to grinding corn; then glad and merry it goes singing along to its ocean home! Why, it is too active and busy to freeze. And so it is in spiritual life. If you sit down on the stool of do-nothing, your soul will freeze like the still pond, but if you go into the vineyard of the Lord and keep working there, you will be too busy and active to freeze. Cold Christians are the inactive ones.

Better Get Ready.

One of the greatest hindrances to the preacher, is the spirit of procrastination, which prevails among the unconverted. "Time enough yet" is the iron shield that wards off the sharp arrows of urgent appeals. Procrastination builds a stone wall between the pulpit and the conscience of the sinner. And yet this fatal habit has the least reason of all sinful habits to sustain it.

First, because every day of delay is attended with awful peril. A large per cent of the deaths among men is sudden death—unexpected death. Thousands fall suddenly dead as if an invisible bullet had penetrated the brain. How often the news comes: "A. B.—died suddenly." Sometimes sudden death is caused by heart failure—then by a railroad collision—the wreck of a ship—the fright of a horse—a bolt of lightning—a cyclone, etc. Dangers stand thick all along the road of life. "In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Years ago a man stood in the door of a court house looking out at a storm. In the twinkling of the eye a thunderbolt darted out from the dark bosom of a storm and struck him, and he was hurried into a stormy eternity. A beautiful young woman, sometime since, was on a visit to the Niagara Falls, and while standing on a high rock overlooking the whirlpool of waters below, she saw a rare flower growing out from the cracks of the rocks. A desire seized her to pluck that flower and carry it home with her as a memorial of her visit to the wonderful Falls. As she stooped to pluck it, her eye fell upon the bewildering whirlpool below. Her head swam, she lost her balance and tumbled over the Falls and plunged into the foaming waters. In a moment she was gone into vast eternity. How sudden her departure. But she was gone to return no more. The tears of a nation, though numerous as the drops in that river, could not bring her back to the land of gospel hope.

But suppose a man should live on, yet to procrastinate seeking the salvation of the soul would be supreme folly. Because delay but increases and multiplies the difficulties of getting religion. Suppose you had to cross a river or die a terrible death. At the source of the river the stream is narrow and shallow, so much so, it can be crossed by one bold step. You see persons crossing over easily and quickly. You are urged to cross too. But you say: "No, not now; it is time enough yet." Well, you wander on down that river, intending to cross sometime in the future and get into the beautiful land of eternal safety. You dismiss all concern about it from your mind and become absorbed in hunting the gold that may be found on the left side of that river. All the time, however, you are traveling down that river, which grows deeper, wider, more turbulent, every mile it flows. After a long time you become concerned again, and begin to think of making your way across. Now, see how your difficulties have increased. When but a boy you stood near the source of this river, and one decisive step would have put you across in the land of religion. But now you are away down where the stream of iniquity has swollen into a roaring, swift, moving river. To get across now requires a tremendous effort. You have to wade into the deep waters of repenting over a long life of rebellion. You have to buffet the back-setting waves of a will grown stiff in disobedience. You have to

conquer the devil standing half way across the river, fiercely trying to drown you with the billows of utter despair. But you must cross or die and sink into the pit of wailing. Now, the folly of delay is too clear to be mistaken. Cross the stream of sin when but a step will land you on the side of God. Do not wait till this stream deepens, widens, and becomes so turbulent and swift-rolling as will sweep you down into the sea of hopelessness.

Mr. I. A. Campbell said: "In the river above the Falls of Niagara there is a point called 'Past Redemption Point.' The reason why it is called so, is because if a vessel goes beyond that point, it is lost, and no power can bring it back. So there is a 'past redemption point' in the lives of sinners, if they do not return to Jesus. Floating down the stream of time, men get beyond the point of returning back to the cross. And then hopelessly they go over the awful falls of the second death.

A mother once was explaining to her little daughter how God had taken away her father and would some day send for the mother and child. The child said: "When will God send for us?" The mother said she didn't know when. The girl said: "If we do not know just when God is going to send for us, had we not better get ready now and keep ready?" There is saving wisdom in that advice of the child. *Get ready and keep ready.*

Grow in Grace.

Life is a growth. This fact is seen in all the kingdoms of nature. Look at the acorn. It has in it the germ of life. Plant it in mellow soil. Its life begins to grow. And after many years, see what growth has done for it. Growth has changed that little acorn, no larger than a marble, into a living tree. A tree with great roots burrowed into the ground, by which it is anchored fast to its place, defying the storms. See the sturdy trunk shooting up into the air like a pillar of firmness. See its wide-spreading branches affording a shade for the panting cattle and a leafy home for the singing birds. There stands the lofty oak, the monarch of the forest, out of which a ship is built to sail around the world. How did the acorn get into this tree with its roots, trunk, and branches? There is but one answer: It was by continual growth. So religion begins in the soul as a seed of spiritual life. How seemingly small at first, but what possibilities slumber in this growing seed.

The growth of religion is often in the Bible compared to a tree. It is described as a mustard seed growing into a large tree. There are three essential things insuring the growth of a tree, namely, good soil, warm sun light, and the rain of the clouds. So there are three essential elements insuring the growth of religion in a man's heart, namely: A clear knowledge of the Scriptures, warmth of zeal, and the watering influences of the Holy Spirit.

Scriptural knowledge is to spiritual growth what rich soil is to the tree. Along rivers you see lofty and spreading trees. Why? Because they are growing in rich bottom soil. And on a certain ridge, you see little scrubby, dwarfed trees. Why? Because the soil is thin and poor. And so that man's religion is apt to be feeble and sickly, who is ignorant of the Scriptures. And then to grow in grace a man must be zealous and earnest in discharging all the duties of life. When the Christian ceases to work, he ceases to grow, and this is the reason why so many of them droop and die.

The Lamb of God.

On the roof of a church in Germany can be seen standing a beautiful lamb cut out of stone. A preacher gives the following history of it: One day a workman was up on a house making some repairs on the roof, when he slipped and fell to the ground. He found when he fell that he struck something very soft, which so eased him down that he was not hurt. It was a poor little lamb that happened to be cropping the grass just then where he fell. The lamb was killed, but the fallen man escaped unhurt. So, out of pure gratitude the man had a lamb of stone carved and set up on the roof as a lasting memento of how he was saved from a fearful death.

The Lamb of God, who can think of the name without feelings of gratitude? "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches." "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb

before his shearer, so He opened not His mouth." Isa. 53: 7. Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God that keeps the world from falling into perdition.

"I lay my sins on Jesus,  
The spotless Lamb of God;  
He bears them all, and frees us  
From the accursed load."

EDITORIAL NOTES.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS.

IF YOU HEAR ANYBODY COMPLAINING that we have cut them off of our subscription list, ask them if we did not give them timely notice and fair warning. If we have made any error in cutting any one off, let us know it at once and we will correct it.

WE PUBLISH THIS WEEK, OVER A column of marriage notices. Of course we expect all these young people to begin housekeeping by subscribing for the ADVOCATE. Whenever a preacher marries a couple, the bridegroom ought to give him a nice fee for his services, and then add \$2.00 for the church paper.

WELL, HERE WE ARE IN OUR NEW offices. You will find us at 205 Fayetteville St., right across the street opposite the National Bank of Raleigh. We are more conveniently located, have more room, and we are nicely fixed up. Come to see us. Look out for our sign, and come right in.

REV. A. R. MORGAN, A MISSIONARY in Japan, writes us from Yokohama:—"Japan's first Diet under a constitutional form of government, assembled on the 25th of Nov., elected a Christian gentleman President of the House of Representatives, and yesterday his election was confirmed by the Emperor."

IT SEEMS TO BE A HARD MATTER TO get an editor for the new paper to be established on the Pacific Coast. Dr. Walker was elected and declined, then Dr. Boswell was elected and he declined. We have plenty of editorial timber in North Carolina. If they will drop the hook over here, they can catch an editor that will not fall back into the water.

REV. DR. McANALLY, THE OLDEST editor in the Southern Methodist Church and a man of large observation and fine ability, expresses the following opinion of our church papers:—"The present writer has a tolerably extensive acquaintance with the literature of the country, especially that of a religious character, and feels free to express the opinion that the periodicals of the M. E. Church, South, are not second to those of any Protestant denomination in the land."

A HYDE CORRESPONDENT OF THE Washington Progress says Dr. Gall, an "eminent divine" of that county, charged a "poor sister \$50 for a receipt to cure warts," and that her friends are out with a subscription paper trying to raise the amount. The Hyde county people are the cleverest people in the world or they could not stand such "eminent divines" as Dr. Gall.

WITH THIS ISSUE OF THE PAPER Rev. Dr. W. S. Black retires as Corresponding Editor. His only reason for so doing is that he may give his entire time to the orphan work, which will fill his head and heart and hands very full. He has been connected with the ADVOCATE for quite a long time, first as one of the Editors and then as Corresponding Editor. He has been and will continue to be a true friend of the paper, and we hope will write for it occasionally. We tender him our sincere thanks for the valuable service he has rendered us, and wish for him that success and usefulness in his new field of labor to which his merits richly entitle him.

AFTER THIS ISSUE THE BRIGHT JEWEL Department of this paper will be transferred to their own little paper, of which Aunt Mary (Mrs. W. S. Black) is the accomplished editor. When they had no paper of their own we gladly gave them this space. Now that they have a paper it is all right and proper that they should communicate with each other through that. We wish them and their paper great success and much usefulness. We shall have a Children's Department in the paper, especially adapted to children and young people and will try to make a pleasant and profitable column to all our little friends.

WHEN BEING PRESSED TO ATTEND to the interests of his soul by a minister, a young man, in speaking of the members of the church in his community, said: "I see them careless in the house of God, engrossed with the honors and pleasures of the world during the week, and I mingle often with those who profess to love me, and they never say a word to me about my soul. It cannot be a matter of so much importance as you represent, or surely they would not be thus inconsistent." Brother, sister, does this apply to you

or to your church? If so, by God's help change this sad state of affairs.

THE ADVOCATE ENTERS UPON THE new year with a fine subscription list and in good condition every way. The past year was one of the best in its history and it hopes to be a better paper and do better work and visit more families in 1891 than it has ever done in any year before. Quite a number of the preachers and other friends of the paper say that they are going to do more for it this year than they ever have done. If all its friends will help, it will grow into a great paper. We hope the preachers will begin their year's work by putting the paper into every family possible at the first of the year so as to get a full year's benefit from it in their work.

A CERTAIN WRITER TELLS A STORY of a woman who worked in a cotton factory in Lancashire, and who went for the first time to see the ocean. When she caught a glimpse of the sea in its wide expanse, as its billows came rushing and rolling in their boundless profusion, she drew a long breath of sweet relief, and said: "At last, here comes something there is enough of." Those who come to the boundless abundance of the gospel, who look out on its vast bountifulness, its ocean-like wideness, may say with a grander emphasis: "At last, here comes something there is enough of." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. Come buy, wine and milk, without money and without price." The gospel, bless the Lord, has an eternal all sufficiency for each and all.

"Enough for each, enough for all, Enough for evermore."

A BAPTIST AND A METHODIST preacher in Georgia are spending three weeks in a debate on doctrinal points. The reports of this debate in the secular papers indicate that it is a reproach to the cause of Christ. In speaking of it the State Chronicle, of this city, very pertinently says:

The religion of the Lord Jesus is not one of disputation. It is a gospel of peace and love and concord. There is in it nothing of the harrangue of the political platform or the antics of a circus. Men called of God to preach the gospel are not mindful of the obligations of the call when they turn aside to denounce each other and split hairs over theological problems. The apostles did not believe they ought to turn aside from the great work to "serve tables." Much less ought men to turn aside to strivings and denunciations and bitterness.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

CONDUCTED BY REV. H. T. HUDSON, D. D., (OUR ASSOCIATE EDITOR.)

LESSON FOR JANUARY 11TH, 1891.

TOPIC.—Idolatry in Israel.  
I Kings 12: 25-33.

Golden Text.—"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image."—Exo. 20: 4.

ANALYSIS OF THE LESSON.

1. Jeroboam becomes the first King of Israel and builds up a Capital in Mount Ephraim.
2. He takes measures to keep his people from going up to Jerusalem to worship as that would tend to alienate his people from his own kingdom and attach them to the kingdom of Rehoboam.
3. And so provides for the religious wants of his people by making two golden calves, putting one idol in Bethel and the other in Dan.
4. He next builds temples of worship, and sets apart priests chosen from the lower ranks of society; and ordains a national feast and offer; sacrifice.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE LESSON.

- The acts of Jeroboam. Verses 25-33.
1. Who was Jeroboam? Ans. The son of Nebat, the first king after the division of the kingdom over Israel.
  2. What was meant by his building Shechem? That he enlarged and built up that place with palaces and public buildings, and made it the capital of his new kingdom.
  26. "And Jeroboam said in his heart."
  3. What was meant by this? It means that he was ashamed to speak in words what he intended doing.
  27. "If the people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord, then shall the heart of the people turn again unto their Lord, even unto Rehoboam, king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam, king of Judah."
  4. What did Jeroboam fear, if the people went up to Jerusalem to worship? That the hearts of his people would be estranged from him and won back to Rehoboam.
  5. What did he do to prevent this possible danger? The answer is found in the next verse.
  - "Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, it is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."
  6. What was the shape of these golden idols? They had the shape of an ox or calf.

7. Were they made of solid gold? No, it is supposed they were made of wood covered with gold plates.

8. What did the king say after he had made them? "Behold thy gods... which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

9. What did he mean by this statement? That he was not introducing new gods for them to worship, but the same ones that had brought them out of the land of bondage.

10. Who else had used the words "Behold thy gods, O Israel?" Aaron when he made the golden calf at the foot of Mt. Sinai. See Exo. 32: 4.

30 v. "And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan."

11. In what way did the people sin? They were guilty of the sin of idolatry.

12. What is idolatry? It is worshipping some creature in the place of the Creator.

31 v. "And he made a house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people."

13. What is meant by making a house of high places? He built temples of worship at the cities where the golden calves were set up.

14. What else did he do? Selected unworthy persons for priests, such as did not belong to the priestly tribe.

32 v. "And Jeroboam ordained a feast... Sacrificing unto the calves."

15. What feast was this? The Feast of Tabernacles, which was the great feast of the harvest, or ingathering of crops. To what month does "the eighth month" among the Jews correspond to ours? To November.

ILLUSTRATIONS ON THE LESSON.

The missionaries among the gentoos are obliged to use various methods to attract attention to Divine things. One day a missionary took with him a little boy to a shady place where many heathen people were standing and set him to reading aloud, when some of them began to listen. The subject was the absurdity of idolatry. A Brahman in the crowd said: "My little boy, why do you speak so lightly of the gods of your fathers?" The little boy replied in a loud voice, "Speak lightly of them!" Then quoting from Psalm 115: 4—said: "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but speak not; eyes have they, but see not: They have ears, but hear not: nose have they, but smell not. They have hands, but handle not; feet have they, but walk not: neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them. The Brahman walked away confounded. One morning a little girl came as usual, into her parent's room, to kneel down at her mother's knee, and repeat her prayers. Before she could do so her father held up the picture of a Hindoo god, and said, "See, Mary, what a god the heathen pray to." It was ugly, very much so, and it looked sour and ill-natured. She gave it but a look, which said: "What an ugly god!" and immediately dropped on her knees at her mother's side, and began saying in a sweet voice: "Our Father, which art in heaven," etc. Her parents wept for joy, because she evidently thought that her God was so lovely, kind and great. That little girl has been a missionary collector ever since, and now works for the Chinese schools. What a blessed privilege it is to be born and trained in a Christian land where the true and living God is known and worshipped from infancy.

REFLECTIONS.

(From N. Y. Advocate.)

1. No amount of material strength and prosperity can ever take the place of faithfulness to God's word. If that is wanting, ruin and failure are sure to come. Jeroboam made this mistake.
2. Small departures from the law of God lead to larger ones. A little break in the dam, if neglected, will be followed by a large one, and it will grow until it sweeps the whole away.
3. Churches brought together come to love each other. They preserve their antagonisms only by being kept apart.
4. We are in the midst of an era of church improvements. New organs, new decorations, new paint are found on every side. They may be the sign of weakness rather than strength, but nothing can take the place of revivals.
5. The golden calf of to-day is wealth, and men are ready to worship it on every side.
6. We give too much credit to the power of money. Are these "thy gods, O Israel?"
7. We must keep the whole law sacred. Jeroboam honored the first commandment, but broke the second and all the rest.
8. The example of those at the top or in the front is readily copied, especially when it is weak or bad.
9. There is no need of making the claims of religion any easier or its demands any less. If God has made a law to go up to Jerusalem to worship, it will not do just as well to worship at Dan, because the place happens to be more convenient.
10. Men sink or rise according to their idea of God. The spiritual idea of Jehovah and Jesus cultivates the whole man, and uses his powers of body, reason, moral sense, spiritual perception, and energy. Other religions use only one side of his nature. Form worship is always dangerous from half results.

Renew your subscription.