

# Renewing the Inward Man---A New Year Homily

By Max McD.

Are you the same man you were yesterday? if you are, there is something wrong.

The Apostle Paul, in describing himself, said that half of him decayed and the other half was renewed. All of him that grew old was thrown away and the remainder was all made new. This is the only way to live. The outer man will grow old. It is a blessing to us if it decays.

It is characteristic of all growth that the outside is cast off and the inside renewed. If your mother had made your first clothes of cast-iron and buttoned them on to stay, where would you be. Look at the Chinese woman's foot. You must cast aside your baby clothes if you are going to become a man.

The outer man is of value only as an expression of the inner man. Unless we are careful the man disappears and there is only a manner (man ner) left. Someone has said: "Manners are the external deposit left by a dead heart that was once warm," and a little girl described a gentleman as "a man you don't know very well."

Unless the outward man decays, the inward man is stifled. The soul cannot stand being clad in the garments of propriety and the mask of conventionality. It would be a good thing to have all the varnish scraped off us periodically to see if there is anything at all left underneath.

It is easy to develop the outer man so that he will run as a sort of automaton. Most business men become mechanical toys, and most professional men become lignified: they are only wooden men. It would do many a clergyman, doctor or lawyer good to rip his long-tail coat up the back and strip off all his professional mannerisms.

As a small boy I used to wonder whether a certain old minister at home, who was an old man, wore a shirt like my father's or not. In the 20 odd years I lived in the town in which I was born, I never once saw him in his shirt sleeves. I've often looked at an Archbishop, whom I did not know personally, with his tight bishop's breeches and spats, and wondered what sort of mortal he was; but after we had sat in the same railway coach seat for one hundred miles and chatted together, I found him to be a man like other men. A Roman Catholic Priest worked for a year or so on the same mission field as I. I had him often as a guest, and one night he stayed in my shack. He wore my nightgown and slept in the same bed. If there was one thing that impressed me more than another, it was the fact that Father B--- was a man like myself.

Let the outer man decay: strip off the professional mannerisms, and let us see what we have underneath.

It is really a choice in life whether a woman will be a dressmaker's dummy or a living soul; whether a man will be a machine or a son of God. We become so proud of the outer man that we don't notice the absence of the inner man. We acquire the art of talking so well that no one notices that nothing is said.

Let the outer man decay, then. But this is not all. The inward man must be renewed every day.

You would find it wearisome if the same copy of your daily paper were handed out to you every day. A man should have in him more that is new and fresh than a newspaper. He should get out a new issue of himself every day. No one can blame our friends of tiring of us if we hand them out the same bits of personal adventure, the same editorials, the same old joke column, every time we meet. Old friends are not best friends unless they find something new and inspiring in one another. If we want to be true friends we must be renewed every day.

Your house will not be popular if you set before your guests the same old roast that should have been buried decently long ago. We mustn't let our lives get stale. It is disgusting to our friends to find us harping on the same old hobbies, touching on the same old grievances, full of the same hackneyed expressions of affection, with the same narrow point of view, the same faults and worries, the same dreary struggle, no new hopes or visions, not even a new difficulty or a new sin. God save us from being a stale friend to anyone.

## A New Year Greeting

From PRINCIPAL PETERSON,  
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The Editor, Western Home Monthly, Winnipeg, Man.

Dear Sir:—I hope I am still in time for your New Year number, but my message must be a short one. We are all so greatly absorbed in the incidents of the war and so much concerned about its probable issue, that it is difficult to write or think about anything else. And perhaps it is this feeling of solidarity, the feeling that we all have a common interest at stake, that makes it natural for me to say a word or two about the war. First, let us remember that this is, for us, a Canadian war. We have got past the time, have we not, when some Canadians imagined that we should be able, as a nation, to look on while Britain did the fighting; and even now that we have sent our contingent to Europe we are not simply "helping the Old Country"—though Heaven knows she needs all the help she can get! This is a "war in defence of the Empire," and as Canada is the first of the new nations within that Empire, it is altogether natural that she should play her part nobly as she is doing. Let us hope that the Allies may win a decisive triumph in the end. When we have helped the Germans to get rid of the evil spirit of Prussian militarism, the world will have a rest from the anxieties which have distracted it for the last twenty years. And when that great day comes let us, here in Canada, profit by the lessons of the war and work all the harder with a clear purpose of binding together in the bonds of faith and trust the scattered provinces of our wide Dominion, so that it may continue steadfast to the end as the brightest jewel in Britain's Imperial Crown.

With all good wishes for 1915.

Yours faithfully,

W. Peterson,

Principal.

Yet it's no wonder if we are. Our minds lie in ruts like stagnant mud-puddles. We hate to have our minds stirred up, to really grapple with life. We let them stagnate in the same old ruts until they become so covered with scum that our only hope of salvation is to get up and shake ourselves periodically. There is enough concentrated power in an acorn to push up a giant shaft a hundred feet into the air and crown it with green, and there is enough divine energy in these little melancholy souls of ours to lift us up into heaven in the grandeur and strength of a perfect manhood.

There was an old dirty, stagnant lake that had lain motionless among the mountains of New Zealand a thousand years. By chance a volcano broke loose in the bottom of it and

blew that muddy stagnant pond into a fancy rainbow geyser a mile high. There was something new in New Zealand that day.

Every man has in him tons and tons of divine dynamite. Let it catch the spark of inspiration and transform us into something altogether new.

Let us renew our minds. Throw out some of the old trash and get something that is real and living.

Let us renew our hearts. Throw out old emotions we have preserved to exhibit to our friends: the bottled tears of blighted affections, the misunderstood friendships that we have laid away in scented sentiment—throw them all out, and let the great, pure, strong love of God and our fellowmen fill our hearts.

Let us throw out past achievements that we love to roll like cherished morsels upon our tongues. Forget what we have done in what we will do. The man who tells of what he has done is not likely to do any more. If we've won a prize or two, forget it. That is behind let us face to the front.

Someone has said: "We should not attempt to feed the hungry with last year's muffins, nor try to comfort the distressed with joy in the Lord a year old." That would be cold comfort.

If we have no vital religious experience to-day, something is wrong with us. If we have no joy in some good thing we have had a chance to do; no warming of the heart with the sense of God's love; no burst of longing for that which is highest and best; then we have an aged, rheumatic, hobbling soul. We need a new birth.

One of the chief dangers of life is trusting to great occasions. We think that conspicuous events, striking experiences, exalted moments, have most to do with our character and capacity.

But we are wrong. Common days, monotonous hours, wearisome paths, plain old tools, and every day clothes, tell the real story. Good habits are not made on birthdays, nor Christian character at the New Year. The vision may dawn, the dream may awaken, the heart may leap with a new inspiration on some mountain top, but the test, the triumph, is at the foot of the mountain, on the level plain.

The line that divides the years from one another is an imaginary and artificial one. To the thoughtful mind every day of life is solemn and every season is a fit time for reflection.

And yet, because we have at this season of the year to close a volume and begin to number the pages anew, we naturally fall into a serious mood and take occasion to review the past and consider where we stand.

It is a time for making resolutions. On New Year's night as the dying year passes countless thousands will swear off. The boozier will raise his trembling hand: "Boys! My last drink; watch it go down." The worshipper of My Lady Nicotine will fill his pipe for a last smoke. The dancer will shake his last loose leg on the stroke of "12." The swearer will do his last bit of picturesque word painting at 11.59.

Some of these will be broken. And yet we must not doubt that there are as many New Year resolves kept as there are broken. The New Year is a good time to turn over a new leaf. There are a great many bright, fresh pages turned over on the first day of January that will have a clean record at the end of the year if we will but remember that every day begins a New Year, and our good resolutions must be renewed with each rising sun.

"Though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day."