

is now again prevailing in Madagascar; and centres of spiritual light forth here and there all along the coast of the vast continent of Africa, like lighthouses gleaming on the shores of a dark and stormy sea.

The past year has been one of commotion and sore trouble to many lands, but all has tended, so far to the furtherance of the Gospel. It is the day of preparation. God is overturning, overturning, overturning till He shall reign whose right it is to reign—till His Church is completed and all His own people are gathered from the four winds of Heaven and made joyful at the marriage supper of the Lamb. We may not be able to tell at the present moment what good purpose will be served by the astounding events that are transpiring, but faith pierces the cloud, mounts above the gloom, and reposes in the wondrous calm of that blissful region where the light of God is unobscured by any shadow.

Some sections of the Church have been severely tried and troubled during the past year. Civil war has maddened brother against brother; the walls of Zion have been rudely shaken, and barriers of separation have been erected where all was once unity and love. Other sections have been refreshed with showers of reviving grace. In Canada a great breach was healed and a glorious union effected among Presbyterian brethren. But let us now look nearer home.

No period could have been more critical in the history of our Church than that through which we have passed within a year. Surrounded by many enemies, not knowing the full strength of our friends, there were fears of coming dangers. Enemies denounced the union as false and hollow, and prophesied its speedy dissolution. Nothing would satisfy them short of an extensive *secession* from our happy and harmonious fold. Crafty men devised crafty plans to bring this evil upon us; but they overreached themselves; and God of His great goodness has preserved us in peace and unity until this day. The clouds have all vanished now; scarcely a speck is above the horizon; the sweet spirit of brotherly love inspires every heart. We have been baptized together in joy and in deep sorrow. Our tears have mingled as they fell over the graves of Gordon and of Johnston; and our united prayers have ascended to our Redeemer's throne. We have realized the fact that ours is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; God has made us one, and by his good hand helping us no man shall put us asunder.

A few weaklings have been seduced from their steadfastness by the bait of worldly advantage; a few, by appeals to silly prejudices; and a few have left for a more congenial connexion in order to escape impending discipline. While we deeply regret the loss of one adherent through faithlessness or sin or weakness, we cannot but rejoice and express our abounding gratitude to our Heavenly Father for our numerical strength as a Church—for the stringency of our discipline—the purity of our communion, and for our soundness in the faith. True, imperfections of portentous magnitude may still cleave to our *working*; we do not live and act up to our privileges or professions. We are indolent and unwatchful. Alas, that it should be so! Still let us thankfully acknowledge the progress we have made, and strive eagerly for still higher attainments and a more satisfactory position.

The census of the year that is gone shows that while we made some progress, we are still far behind other bodies of Christians whose systems of belief we deem in some measure erroneous and whose advantages are inferior to ours. Why should it be so? Why should our respected brethren of other denominations increase at the rate of forty per cent in ten years while our rate