

every moment. Death is near; it is knocking at our doors and coming in upon our windows. We feel its chilling breath.—The uplifted stroke may fall on us at any moment. The graves are opening at our feet and closing again over our dearest earthly treasures. What do all these circumstances speak to us? Go forward!—Forward, in usefulness to our fellow-men; in devotedness to the work of God; in love to God and men; in holiness and self-sacrifice; in readiness for death, and preparation for Heaven.

Every touch of disease in our own bodies bids us make haste; for it tells us of the approaching dissolution of this poor house of clay. Each closing day should be a memento of the closing day of life, and impress us with the urgency of the command to go forward. This closing year may be our last year on earth; we must therefore not merely look forward but go forward.

As this command is addressed to each individual christian, so it is addressed to the Church collectively. The Church has a mighty work to do on earth. Vast nations, whole continents, are still almost entirely under the terrible sway of heathenism. Countless myriads of souls are perishing. Inexpressible misery is endured on earth, and a dark and hopeless eternity is encountered in innumerable instances, for want of Gospel light. O how loud is this call to the Church to go forward to the conquest of a sinful and suffering world! God has entrusted the Church with the Gospel, and woe be to her if she be slack or faithless in spreading the good news. Red seas of persecution may rage before her—as was the case in Madagascar twenty years ago; as is the case in China now. But through the floods is the way to the promised inheritance. Had Israel halted at the margin of the sea, and refused to go forward, Pharaoh would have triumphed, and total ruin and everlasting shame would have overwhelmed the people of God. To halt, to waver, to turn back when God bids us go forward, is ever full of deadly peril.

In the world around us this seems to be the watchword everywhere. The enterprise of man has established instantaneous

communication between distant lands separated by wide and stormy seas. It has tamed the lightning, and yoked the fierce energies of steam. It has enabled man to travel more swiftly than the wind itself. And still the motto of Europe and America is, Go forward! Surely the spiritual domain should not lag behind when so much remains to be done.

The generations that have gone before us, by their failures as well as by their achievements, are calling us to press forward in the right way, to do the work that lies before us. The generations of the future have their claims upon us, for they must soon fill our places, bear these burdens to which we bend our shoulders, fight these battles to which we nerve our arms.

We are called to advance in our loyalty to Christ and His cause; in our open-hearted liberality; in our zeal for the honour and glory of God and the salvation of souls; in our efforts to extend the influence of truth in our own land, in our immediate vicinity, and wherever the way is pointed out to us. The Lord hates backsliding, wavering, spiritual cowardice. He will have us make no truce with Pharaoh. His presence will go with us and give us peace in our souls though the hosts of the foe should rage around us.

To go forward is the safest, the only safe policy for the individual; for the congregation; for the Church as a whole; forward in the face of weakness and fear and trembling; in the face of raging seas and stormy skies. The pillar of fire will direct and protect till our pilgrimage and our battle are over, and we lay aside arms and armour at the feet of the Prince of Peace.

SYSTEMATIC SUPPORT OF THE LORD'S CAUSE.

BY REV. E. A. M'CURDY.

NO. II.

If the Most High God is the possessor of heaven and earth; if He is the disposer of all events; if He gives the prince his palace, the noble his mansion, and the peasant his cottage; if all we have and enjoy really belongs to Him, and is entrusted to