

ought ever to lead to serious inquiry and prayerful meditation, and the solemn injunction which the Apostle gives when speaking of the great consummation of all things, "Be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer," may not inappropriately apply to the close of another year of arduous labour in the cause of Scripture circulation; the conclusion of another of those records which tell of large opportunities, and extensive means, and abounding mercy. Sobriety of thought is ever a wholesome atmosphere to breathe, and watchfulness unto prayer both seeks the counsel of a loving Father and follows in the steps of His gracious guidance. To work under such influences as these should be our constant aim, and to realize their power will ever be our greatest happiness. And if these weighty words of the Apostle contain a caution applicable to all times, when the account of any stewardship must be given up, more especially do we need their admonition in our festive seasons and days of rejoicing. We are met together this day to tell of God's goodness, to celebrate fresh triumphs of Divine grace and truth over human ignorance and Satanic power, to note some further progress in the onward shining of that Light which is destined to shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day, and in doing so it becometh us well to be glad and rejoice before the Lord. But our gladness should be tempered with sobriety, and our joy with seriousness. The work in which we are engaged is advanced not so much by the excitement of the great congregation, as by the devout aspirations of the humble and contrite heart; and if your Committee may venture to throw out a suggestion bearing upon the most urgent need of the Christian Church, they would say to those who love the Lord and long to see the rays of the Sun of Righteousness pour their bright light upon the dark places of the earth, pray earnestly for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The Scriptures now translated into more than 200 languages may be said to be within easy reach of a large proportion of mankind—what is needed is a spiritual faculty to apprehend their teaching and to lay hold on the hope which the Gospel reveals. The landscape of Divine truth stands out to view in all the bold outline of God's revealed will, sparkling in the sunshine of His grace, and radiant with the promises of His love, but its beauty is hidden until the eyes of the blind are anointed; and its varied features produce no emotions of joy until the souls of the dead are quickened. And here lies the difference between man's work and God's work. We can give the Book, but we cannot bend the will. We can unfold the mind of God, but we cannot unveil the heart of man. We can emboss the characters so as to establish a telegraphic communication between the touch and the intellect of the naturally blind, but we cannot pass on the wire to his soul so as to flash conviction there. We can provide bread sufficient for the food of countless multitudes, but we cannot give the appetite by which alone it is relished, or produce that assimilating process through which the soul is nourished by it unto everlasting life.

Oh that, seeing how powerless we are apart from Divine grace and teaching, this vast assembly might be moved as one man to cry mightily to God for help, and thus strike a key-note of intercessory prayer, in harmony with which the whole Church of Christ might