

## THE PAST YEAR.

We have passed another of the prominent way marks in our journey through life. We have left behind us the year 1874, and have entered on a new year. A short pause will not be unsuitable. A few thoughts at this season may be appropriate and useful, and help to deepen our humility, to stimulate our energy, to draw forth our gratitude, and increase our zeal and devotedness as a church and as individuals.

Another year has gone! Its opportunities are for ever beyond our reach—its record is closed forever. Whatever our state or position may be, must we not acknowledge that we have cause for humiliation in looking back on the past? Who can say that they have redeemed the precious days as they should have done, that they have availed themselves, as they should, of opportunities of doing good or of receiving good, that they have made the progress in the divine life that they ought to have made? Truly we are all unprofitable servants, and we must look, not to our own diligence, or fidelity, or obedience, but to the mercy of God in Christ, for acceptance with Him. May His grace stimulate our affections and energies, so that, with renewed and increased alacrity and zeal, we may set ourselves to the work assigned us, and run our Christian race. May we forget the things behind, and reach forth to the things before.

We have had not a little to call forth our gratitude. Not to speak of temporal mercies—though it becomes us to acknowledge God in them, and these during the year have been manifold and abundant—we have had, as a church, many tokens of the Lord's favour and goodness. We have to recognize His guiding and ever-ruling hand in the result of Union negotiations. Before the meeting of the Assembly in Ottawa, many were in anxiety and perplexity, lest painful alienations and divisions might take place. But these fears were averted, and matters brought to a harmonious issue, so that those who had previously taken the strongest ground in opposition to the Basis of Union, were enabled to acquiesce, or at any rate to offer only a mild and modified dissent from some parts of the Basis. We have to recognize the same goodness in guiding the proceedings which have subsequently taken place, and in bringing us to a position from which we can look forward with feelings of comfort and anticipations of most beautiful results to the Union, which we believe will be consummated in June next.

In other ways God's goodness has been very remarkably manifested. He has directed and guided us in the selection of an additional Missionary labourer for India, one who has left our borders carrying with him the interest and affection of all who knew him. He hath remarkably blessed him who has hitherto been labouring alone among the heathen. But above all God hath visited many parts of our church with gracious revivals of religion. The prayers of his servants and people have been heard, and not a few of our congregations have been visited and refreshed, the hearts of believers have been gladdened and revived, and many both of young and old have been gathered into the fold. In other congregations too, where as yet no special blessing has been experienced, there is an awakened state of feeling, a growing desire for more spiritual life, a looking for of something beyond the mere routine of outward duties. Religion is now the subject of conversation where but a short time ago it would have appeared to be out of place. For this changed state of things, which we trust points to something better in store for us, it becomes us to offer our grateful thanks to the God of all grace.