

## What has 1855 done for You.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

While some welcome with smiles and hopes of affectionate greetings another New Year, let us pause upon its threshold, and glance backward over that to which we have just bid adieu. Another marked period of time has passed over our heads, fraught with events of high import, and bearing with it its lessons, warnings, encouragements and admonitions. None of us, old or young, stand precisely as we did; a change has passed over us either for the better or the worse. There are many who would gladly place themselves, at the close of the year, as its opening found them, but it cannot be; 1855 belongs not to time but to eternity, it has gone like a rapid foaming torrent, leaving many a trace of ruin and desolation behind it. Some sweet pastures too there are, green and verdant, through which it has gently and flowed would fain have lingered in its onward course. Let us look a little to what has occurred in 1855. God's judgments have been abroad, there have been wars and rumours of wars, mens' hearts have failed them for fear. A city that was strong in its battlements and powerful in its defences lies in ruins desolate, deserted, without inhabitant, without defence. Many villages, lately the home of industry, and humble happiness, are now roofless and tenantless. While from the mud huts of the Russian serf, the scattered hamlets of the Turkish peasants, the homestead and cottage of the British soldier, from the Hall and the Castle, and the Court, has arisen, one long wail of anguish and bereavement. The hope and the pride of the family circle, the beloved member of the household, the stay and prop of many a desolated home, lie beneath these swelling mounds in a distant land.

In the narrower circle, too, of domestic life, God has spoken by his judgments,

calling upon all men to repent. Many have been suddenly, by accidental circumstances, called to give in their account without any time for making it up, many by bereavements or long and severe sickness have been warned how short time is, and how sure death is. Many have seen what they placed their chief happiness and dependence upon perish from their sight, their riches have taken wing and fled away, and their golden idols have proved themselves to be no Gods. The wheels of God's providence which are for ever moving to and fro, have their bright as well as their dark aspect, and while God's judgments have been abroad, His mercies have been new every morning. God has not dealt with us as a nation, as we deserved, but according to His own great loving kindness. He has disappointed many fears, and given rains in their season, filling the land with food and gladness. He hath not turned back our arms in the day of battle, but has given us the victory that we may know Him as the Lord of Hosts; and even from amidst the heaps of slain and in the din of battle, He hath gotten Himself glory, for not a few valiant in fight counted it their highest glory that they were soldiers of the cross, and the voice of prayer and the hymn of praises mingled with the dying groan and the shout of victory; and the speedy death, bitter for the moment, was but like the chariot of Elijah, to take the spirit home.

In recounting our mercies do not let us forget our trials, for are they not mercies? are they not the remedies of a kind and skilful physician who sees our disease and sends us what will check or cure it, though the application be at the time painful. None that have been sanctified by trial will regret the process, for has it not been unspeakable gain. We may have lost an earthly treasure, but we have obtained an heavenly one. The ties which bind us to this world may be indeed loosened, but