

spiritual improvement. Suffer us then to review the past, and exhort you again for the future to gird up the loins of your mind, and, by a renewed plighting of your vows to be the servants of Him who has called you to his kingdom and grace, seek so to fulfil the part assigned you, that you may at last obtain the reward of the faithful.

We give thanks to God who rules over the kingdoms of the earth, that our country has been preserved from the evils of war. The portentous cloud which at one time seemed to hang over our land, was speedily dispersed, and He who sitteth upon the circle of the earth, so controlled the passions of men, and guided the counsels of rulers, as to turn aside the threatened catastrophe of an armed conflict between two Christian nations. We devoutly recognize in this happy result, the answer to the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous. "Some trust in horses, and some in chariots, but we will trust in the name of the Lord: and whatever may be the apparent sufficiency of our military resources, we maintain as our shield and watchword, that "wisdom and knowledge is the stability of our times, and the strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is our treasure."

Permit us again to remind you, dear brethren, that the chief end, and solemn import of our church relations and associations, is the promotion of spiritual religion in our own hearts, and its extension in subduing the world to Christ. The fellowship of the saints is the bond of our union, and the secret impulse of the Church's aggressive power. The spiritual life within, pervading every part, must prepare its members for the exhibition of the activities of a purified nature, showing themselves without in such forms and modes of operation, as shall both impress and attract those who have not yet come within the circle from which the spiritual influence emanates. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven."

The great end of the ministry is the conversion of souls. If this result does not follow our labours, we may well take up the discouraging inquiry: "Who hath believed our report?" It will avail us little, that we have attracted large congregations, that multitudes are pleased with our ministry, praise our sermons, and manifest the highest regard for our persons and office. The peace and prosperity of our churches, in external things, may be preserved, and their numbers increased, and yet all this is nothing in the accomplishment of the real work, nothing for God's glory, and nothing for our own ultimate and glorious reward, unless believers are edified, and the Lord add unto his church such as are saved. What we effect through the grace of God, in the conversion of the soul at first, and in carrying on that work to its full and final completion, and that only, will abide the test of the ordeal of fire, and be the crown of our rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus."

But while we recognize the preaching of the Gospel by a living ministry, as the chief instrumentality amongst the agencies of the church, we would not fail to remind you of your relations and duties. As of old, the word preached may fail of its intended effect, not being mixed with faith in those who hear it. A spiritual ministry, and a saved, sanctified people, are essential to a true representation of the visible body of Christ. Hence the duties which your relations involve, are as binding and important in the sphere of your calling, as those of the minister in his; and if neglect-