

has befallen us could not have been without cause, nor without a gracious design. By the merciful kindness of our gracious Lord, we have been sustained and prospered beyond the anticipations of our best friends, and contrary to the prophecies of others. The watch-towers of our Zion, and her closed sanctuaries, are well nigh occupied. Our concern now is not about existence, but about extension. Our Church schemes are being well sustained. Our young men have facilities for acquiring a liberal and sound education. Our *Missionary Record* is well supported, and acquiring wider and wider circulation,—affording evident tokens of its efficiency, and of growing interest in our successes. Considering the Lord's goodness to us during the past, have we not much reason for devout thanksgiving, and much cause to use our best efforts to improve the blessings continued to us, in dependence on Divine aid, and seeking Divine counsel?

It is the privilege of our Church to have lessons of the united wisdom and experience of the most pious and learned of past ages transmitted to us. Her standards have been well tried by many of the most excellent of the earth, and transmitted to us unimpaired. Her Church government has been fully tested at home, and, on actual and fair trial, has been declared by those highest in spiritual and secular authority, the highest authority in things spiritual. We need not fear to follow her teachings. As with the Word of God, on which she is based, we have most to fear that we do not adopt her wisdom, and walk worthy of her eminent example. Let it be ours to look first to her purity, and then we may be well assured of her stability. Let it be our constant effort to have the wisest and most faithful ruling in the house of God; and let us have work for all her sons and daughters, and have every one engaged in some good work. Let us, each day, ask, "What can I do for the purity, peace, and prosperity of our Zion?" Let each have it to say, at least, at the end of each year, I have done something to lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes of my beloved Church. Let me prove my wisdom by proving myself an ornament of that Church which has proved a blessing to vast numbers in all the ends of the earth. Be assured that the real ideal of a Church is the union of wise men for the greatest and noblest purposes. May our Church have Wisdom personified in all her members! May she be justified by all her children!

That we may apply our hearts to the work of God—that He may establish the work of our hands upon us, let us, in twos or threes or more, and in the unity of love, pour out our hearts to God for His wisdom and blessing. Let us pray for her ministers, for all her office-bearers, for all her members, for all men; for the success of our Schemes, in private, at the family altar, at our prayer-meet-

ings, and in the great congregation. Let us invoke the presence and blessing of the Hearer of Prayer. We need not ascend to heaven, nor go to remote parts of the earth, to learn what God has done in answer to prayer. How often has He heard the cry of His people in the fastnesses of our fatherland? How often has He sent relief? How often has He blessed to our Church the fiery trials through which He caused her to pass? Has He not, of late, manifestly answered the prayers of our people, who longed for the upraising of the standards of our Church? Has He not, recently, sent pastors to us, in answer to the united prayers of many of us? Shall we not acknowledge the favor of Him, who alone can promote the welfare of His Church? Shall we not be stimulated to persevere in prayer, for His continued countenance? Let every shade of doubt, as to the high privilege and profitableness of prayer, be for ever banished. Let us strive, more and more, as we come together, to possess the true spirit of prayer, and our God shall undoubtedly prosper us. Let us test whether our prayers have been genuine, by considering whether we have been thus stimulated to more united effort to promote the cause of God. As marrow to the bones, as blood to the life, so is prayer to nerve us for active effort in the cause of God. If we would be fitted for a prosperous day's work, we must spend our night in communion with God. Let us learn this from our Great Exemplar. If we have prayed aright, in that faith which is fruitful in good works, we shall show it in our efforts to do good. Prayer is the pulse and nerve of true religion. Fervent in spirit, and active in business, must ever go together. The highest exercise of prayer is in seeking the advancement of His kingdom, and praising Him at all times. In this, we see the pre-eminency of the Lord's prayers. May it be ours to seize more of His Spirit, and to evidence more of His zeal! Amen.

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## The Close of the Year.

BY NORMAN MACLEOD, D.D.

"REMEMBER all the way the Lord hath led thee" during the past year.

**Remember His Mercies**—Calmly review, as far as you can, what God has given you these bygone months.

**Have you been blessed with bodily health?** If so, consider what a gift it is to be spared the torture that some endure: the restless, feverish nights; the long and weary days; the unceasing pain; the no-hope of relief in this world.

**Have you been blessed with mental health?** If so, think of the mercy of not having been visited with insanity, or of having been freed