

space amidst our busy employments, and reflect on some of the messages, which the past year in its course has brought to us from the Eternal.

One voice which the past year bore to us as it passed was unquestionably the still small voice of mercy and loving-kindness. One call which it addressed, was, especially to us in this highly favored land, a call to gratitude for many and signal benefits and blessings. We have had not only peace, but plenty too in all our borders. God hath been true to his promise, that "seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease." In due time the pastures were clothed with flocks, and the valleys covered over with corn, and the year crowned with the goodness of the Lord. Our merchants and agriculturists have been in general successful and prosperous. The resources of the country have been largely developed, and many blessings of a religious as well as of a civil nature, have been vouchsafed to us as a community. Let us not be insensible to the Lord's goodness. Let us not be deaf to the call addressed to us. Let us not proudly disown the hand which hath shielded and sustained us, but meekly and reverently adore Him from whom cometh every good and perfect gift. Nor let us be satisfied with mere general expressions of gratitude, but let us individually reflect on our obligations to God, and pray that his goodness may truly lead us to repentance, so that our gratitude may be evidenced by ardent piety, cheerful obedience to his commandments, unfeigned submission to his blessed will, and entire devotedness to his service.

But the past year has sounded in our ears other voices more loud, and solemn, and terrible. There has been the voice of pestilence, the wailing cry of painful and deadly disease. The angel of death had a commission to our land, and in many places multitudes were suddenly arrested, and called into the eternal world to give in their great account. In many instances the husband has been called to a hurried and sad parting with the wife of his affections; and again, the wife has seen herself by a sudden stroke rendered a desolate mourner. Many children have been left orphans. Many brothers and sisters have been separated by the remorseless hand of death. It is true the pestilence was soon removed. The angel of death soon took his departure. But it becomes us to remember and to profit by the warning. Others were taken, while we have been left. Our day of grace has been lengthened out. Let us redeem the time, and number our days, and seek an interest in Christ. Whatsoever our hands find to do, let us do it with our might, working while it is called to-day, before the night come when no man can work.

Solemn calls and warnings in other forms have been addressed to us. Perhaps in no year have there occurred so many fatal catastrophes involving the destruction of large numbers of our fellow-creatures. Collisions and other disasters, both at sea and on land, have been more than usually frequent and fatal. A voice from the Atlantic louder than the roar of its waves, has

come to us, to tell us that in such an hour as we think not the Son of Man may call us. Let us lay to heart the lesson. Let us remember that death is not invariably preceded by the warning of lingering disease, but that it may come suddenly, when we are sitting in the house or walking by the way;—while we are sitting in solitude, or joining our fellow-creatures in the busy haunts of men. Death does not confine its visits to any one particular time or place.

Leaves have their time to fall,

And flowers, to wither at the north wind's breath,

And stars to set—but all

Thou hast all seasons for thine own, Oh, Death.

Thou art where billows foam;

Thou art where music melts upon the air;

Thou art around us in our peaceful home,

And the world calls us forth, and thou art there.

Thou art, where friend meets friend,

Beneath the shadow of the elm to rest;

Thou art where foe meets foe, and trumpets rend

The skies, and swords beat down the princely crest.

Let the uncertainty of its approach lead us to seek habitual preparation for death, so that at whatever time, and in whatever circumstances it may come, it may not find us unprepared.

A war-cry has sounded from the east, which still engages the attention of the civilized world. At first there were rumours of war. Negotiation was tried with the view of averting the dread alternative. But negotiation was tried in vain. The Autocrat, in his pride and ambition, would listen to no proposal, however reasonable. Now, some of the most powerful nations of the earth are engaged in deadly conflict. We look on the war as a righteous and justifiable one, and we earnestly pray that God may vindicate the cause of righteousness, and overrule the conflict for good—even for the circulation of His own blessed word, and the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom. But in the meantime we cannot contemplate the struggle, which has already proved fatal to thousands of our fellow-subjects, without feelings of the deepest concern. Let us humble ourselves in the dust before God, remembering that if there are wars and fightings, they come from the lusts and unsanctified passions of men. Let us also earnestly pray for the approach of the time when the empire of the Prince of Peace shall be established, and when men shall study war no more. Meanwhile, enjoying as we do so many blessings, let us respond to the duty devolving upon us, of ministering to the necessities and comforts of those widows and orphans, whose protectors have fallen, or who may fall in battle. Let us contribute according to our ability, showing ourselves willing to communicate, ready to distribute.

In conclusion—while we rejoice that the Empire with which we are so closely linked, has adopted what we regard as the right side, let us, as individuals, see that we are on the right side, in regard to a still mightier struggle. Let us see that we are on the side of Christ. Neutral we cannot be, for He himself has declared that if we are not with him, we are against him. Let

us see then that we are on the side of Christ and come what will, we shall be safe, yea, we shall be conquerors, and more than conquerors, through him who loved us, and gave himself for us.

COLLECTION FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

We would call the attention of all our ministers, sessions, and congregations to the Synodical appointment of a collection for Foreign Missions to be made on the third Sabbath of this month. The object is a most important one, and one to which no faithful follower of Christ Jesus can be indifferent. It is the Saviour's command that the Gospel shall be preached to all nations, yea to every creature;—and the carrying out of this command calls for the co-operation of all the true and faithful members of His church. Immense portions of the mission field are yet unbroken. None have gone out to them to break up the ground, and cast in the good seed of the kingdom. While in some cases, where there are open doors, and tokens of God's blessing, the work languishes for want of men and for want of means. Surely it is the duty of the Church ungrudgingly to furnish the means, and earnestly to pray the Lord of the vineyard to furnish men—men of a missionary spirit,—men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. Probably at no former period have there been so many doors opened up for the introduction of the Gospel, and so many urgent calls for Bibles and for missionaries as in the present day. May we have grace to listen to the call, and to bear our part in the great and glorious work. Men and means are freely given for bringing to a successful termination the mighty struggle in the East. Shall we not freely give the means for carrying on even a mightier conflict,—one between light and darkness, between the Redeemer, and the prince of this world?

Our people will bear in mind, that the Synod of our Church resolved, God helping them, to bear a more direct part in the missionary work than heretofore, and if possible to send out one or two missionaries of our own. The Committee have not been able to make any appointment as yet. But it is to be hoped that God will open their way, and that some one may be found both willing and qualified for the great and honourable undertaking. In the meantime, should no appointment be made, our offering will, as on former years, be cast into the Mission Fund of the Free Church of Scotland, whose missionary operations have been hitherto so signally owned by the great Head of the Church.

We earnestly trust that the collections in all our congregations will be liberal. "Freely ye have received, freely give."

COLPORTAGE.

This important work has been of late several times referred to in our pages. We trust it is commending itself to the earnest and prayerful consideration of our people generally, and especially of our Church courts. We feel more and more convinced that it is the duty of the Church