

THE MONTHLY RECORD

OF THE

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

IN NOVA SCOTIA AND THE ADJOINING PROVINCES

VOL. XI.

APRIL, 1865.

No. 4.

"I'll forget thee, O Jerusalem! let my right hand forget its cunning."—Ps. 137, v. 5.

SERMON,

By the late Rev. James Stuart, of Glasgow.

"THIS is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am the chief."
—1 TIM. i. 15.

[FROM THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.]

THERE is many a sermon, the career of which, if known, would be both an instructive history and a powerful preaching. The manuscript from which the following extract is taken, has run a singular course. Leaving its words to teach their own important lessons, the following particulars have an affecting interest. It is the production of one who a few years ago was a student of distinguished mark among his fellows in the University of Glasgow. With them he was also, from his excellent character, a great favorite. A pencil note, dimly legible, indicates that the sermon was read as a subject of examination before the Presbytery of Islay in 1859—the examination, as we know from other sources, being for license to preach the Gospel. The author—the Rev. James Stuart—having received an appointment from the Colonial Committee of the Church of Scotland to act as a missionary within the bounds of the Presbytery of Montreal, with a special recommendation to the district of Point St. Charles, embarked at Liverpool on the 8th of February, 1860 in the ill-fated Hungarian, which went to pieces off Cape Sable on the 19th of that month. His writing-desk, containing this and other manuscripts, was found upon the shore, and came into the hands of the Rev. George M. Clarke, Presbyterian minister at Shelburne, near the scene of the wreck. Mr. Clarke resolved to read the sermon to his people on the Sabbath following its recovery, and gave intimation to that effect. To the writer of this note, who happened to travel with him last summer, he said, while recounting the circumstances of the occasion, that he had that day the largest and most im-

pressive meeting he ever had or ever expected to have in his church. The very psalms which Mr. Stuart had selected and noted in pencil upon the manuscript were used. The following lines from one of these (Ps. 32) were sung with tremendous solemnity:—

"Surely when floods of waters great
Do swell up to the bria,
They shall not overwhelm his soul,
Nor once come near to him."

The desk with its contents were sent to Glasgow, to the father of Mr. Stuart, commission merchant there. After the conversation with Mr. Clarke above referred to, the writer felt a strong desire to peruse the sermon, and made application for a copy. In the meantime it had been sent to Oxford to be perused by an intimate friend and frequent college competitor of the late Mr. Stuart. Now the original manuscript has re-crossed the Atlantic, and a few extracts from it find a place in these pages. The earnest impassioned tones of the living voice are not heard; but, may it be that these words, charged by the Spirit of God with living effect, shall prove that there are times when, and ways in which, the dead become our most convincing and effective preachers.]

THE confession of Saint Paul—I am the chief of sinners—must seem at first sight to be a mere hypocritical depreciation of himself, inconsistent with other parts of his writings in which he boasts that he was not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles. How, we ask, could Paul say that he was the chief of sinners?

He had indeed persecuted the saints and treated with great violence the Church of God. He had been foremost of those who sought the destruction of Christ's cause. But this was in the days of ignorance. He knew no better. He had been guilty of