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## Church of Scotland

IN NOVA SCOTIA AND THE ADJOINING PROVINCES.

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IF I FORGET THEE, O JERUSALEM! LET MY RIGHT HAND FORGET HER CUNNING."—Psa. 137, v. 5.

### Sermon,

By the Rev. James Christie, A. M., Wallace.

MAT. XXIII. 8. "One is your master, even Christ."

From the latter part of the foregoing chapter it appears that various questions had been put to our Lord by the Pharisees, in the hope of puzzling and confounding him, but so far was this from being the case that the confusion recoiled on themselves, "neither durst any man from that time forth ask him any more questions."

The learned doctors and scribes being put to silence, he turned round to the multitude and his disciples, who had been spectators of this triumph, and took occasion to unfold to them the real character of these hypocritical pretenders to sanctity and religion. He draws an important distinction between their private character and their official authority. He says that "they sat in Moses' seat:" that is, were his successors in teaching the people, and expounding the law and the will of God. In so far as they taught the people the true will of the Almighty, they were entitled to all reverence and obedience: "All, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do." But in so far as their practice was at variance with their precepts, it was on no account to be imitated: "Do not ye after their works, for they say and do not."

He then goes on to say that they were proud, haughty, imperious, ambitious, full of ostentation, vanity, and hypocrisy; in short, as unlike as they could well be to their great prophet and teacher Moses. How unlike that meekest of men was their conduct, who loved the uppermost rooms in feasts, and salutations in the market, and loved to be called "Rab-

bi," and claimed an authority over their fellow Israelites to which they were not entitled. Our Lord cautions his disciples, therefore, against all such unwarrantable practices and opinions. He forbids them to assume any authority the one over the other. "Be ye not called Rabbi, or Great," he says, "for one is your master, even Christ."

We are here told, then, that we have a master. An ignorant world required a teacher. A wicked and perverse generation required a ruler, a lawgiver, to lay down rules for their guidance. Every society must have some ruling power to keep it together, to regulate the relations by which it is connected, and to exercise that salutary discipline necessary for its proper government. Such is the Lord Jesus Christ. To the society of Christians, the society of true believers, the Church, he is King and Head. Although, as his kingdom is not of this world, he is not present among us in the flesh. But it is unnecessary for us to enlarge on this point. All are agreed upon the truth that we have a master.

But we are told—"ONE is your master." The true elect can acknowledge but "one master." When our Lord taught his disciples these words—"one is your master"—he had no doubt in view the divisions and factions in religious belief among his unhappy countrymen the Jews. As you are quite well aware from the page of New Testament history, that unfortunate and blinded people were split up into a variety of fierce sects, who cherished the utmost hostility and rancorous ill-will towards each other, and who, while they all no doubt appealed to the pages of the Old Testament, as the rule of faith and conduct, nevertheless paid more attention to