

# THE MONTHLY RECORD

OF THE

## CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

IN NOVA SCOTIA AND THE ADJOINING PROVINCES

VOL. XI.

JANUARY, 1865.

No. 1.

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

### SERMON FOR THE NEW YEAR,

*By the Rev. Alex. McKay, M.A., Saltsprings,  
West River, Pictou.*

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom"—PSALM xc. 12.

OUR first step into life is a step to the grave, and every succeeding step along the stream of life brings us nearer to that eventful, final step, which ushers us into the ocean of eternity. Every thought and feeling cherished, every talent possessed, and every act of life, bears an important influence on our eternal destiny. Accordingly, every moment brings tidings to the throne of the Universal Judge which shall appear for or against us on the great day of reckoning. The time given to prepare for our eternal recompense, is, at most, short, and its continuance is very uncertain. While these are truths clearly taught us in the Word of God, and continually pressed on our attention, how many spend their brief space of life as if this were their abiding home! how many live as if there were no day of reckoning! How many moments, charged with precious privileges, do the wisest and best allow to pass unimproved! Impressed with these facts, the writer of this Psalm offers up the prayer: "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

Let us endeavor,  
I. To number our days. Wise men in all ages have laboured to impress mankind with a sense of the brevity, the swiftness, and the uncertainty of our days. The Spirit of God also employs a variety of ways to inculcate

constant watchfulness and continual preparation for the momentous interests of eternity.

Time is short. The days of some are short in comparison with others, who live three or fourscore years. The years of man now on earth are short, as regards time, compared with the antediluvian life-time; but ours may be regarded equally long, or longer, considering that we may know more and enjoy more in threescore years, than they during three times as many centuries. The longest life is short in comparison with the eternity of years before. Man's days are short, considering the great work he has to do, and the eternal consequences of our well-doing or ill-doing in time.

Our time comprises the past, the present, and the future. All we are, and all we have, came to us from the past. The present flying moments are crowded with the results of the past, which have a weighty influence on the present and the future of our days. All our intellectual attainments and religious privileges, our habits and character, &c., are transmitted from the past. If we would improve the present or the future, we must know what we are, and our relation to the past. Many have to correct errors, to subdue passions, and renounce habits. All have to improve advantages and opportunities. The young have most to do with the present and the future. Some have gone over three digits, and are now on the last finger of the hand-breadth, which is the inspired measuring line. They have passed through infancy, youth, manhood, and are now in old age. When the outward and inward life of those