

THE

CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTOR.

AUGUST, 1859.

THAT THE SOUL BE WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE, IT IS NOT GOOD"—Prov, xix. 1.

SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE OPENING OF THE SYNOD OF THE PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF NOVA SCOTIA, 28TH JUNE, 1859.

[Published by request.]

1 Peter iii. 8.—*"Be ye all of one mind."*

The injunction embodied in the words of the text, was not addressed to a small body of Christians, living in a remote and particular locality, but to the Christian church diffused over a range of country, bearing no inconsiderable proportion to what was known to be the world, at the time the epistle was written. It purports to be addressed to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. The term "strangers" in the address, is not to be restricted in its reference to the literal descendants of Abraham residing in those countries, who had embraced the Christian faith, as some suppose, but it is to be understood in its metaphorical sense, as descriptive of the external state of the people of God, whether of Jewish or Gentile extraction, who up to this day even, form a small minority, among a people whose habits of thought and feeling, whose pursuits and whose pleasures are altogether alien from theirs, in a land or country in which they have no other than a temporary interest. The strangers were just the professing Christians resident in those widely extended provinces, and from the circumstance of being addressed to Christians scattered over a vast region, the epistle came to the designated Catholic.

The circumstance of the epistle being addressed in a manner to the Catholic Church is important to be noticed, as bearing on the meaning of the injunction chosen for our text. Had it been directed to a small isolated body of Christians, it might be supposed that unanimity among them merely was inculcated, not that their sentiments were to harmonize with the sentiments of Christians in other places. In being addressed to the Catholic church, the doctrine that unanimity