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**Church of Scotland**

**IN NOVA SCOTIA AND THE ADJOINING PROVINCES.**

**OCTOBER, 1859.**

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

**Sermon,**

By the *Rev. William Stewart, Chatham, New Brunswick.*

*Psalms 111:* "Why boasteth thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man."

This Psalm appears to have been composed on occasion of the treachery and cruelty of Doeg, the Edomite, the principal servant of Saul. In the 21st and 22nd chapters of 1st Samuel, a full account is given of the condition and conduct of David and of the person, whom he here addresses, and whose character and end he has described in this Psalm. Doeg was indeed a mighty man, he was chief among the servants of Saul; he was set over them, to counsel, direct and control. He was a mighty man also in his own esteem. He was flattered by his success and superiority in station. He felt as if he alone was fitted for the office which he held, as if he alone was worthy of the honors which he received.

It is thus that many feel, when placed in authority over their fellows. That becoming dignity inseparable from rank and rule, degenerates through selfishness, into an ostentatious and overbearing display of prerogative and power. The haughty demeanor, and the arbitrary procedure both of civil and of sacred rulers, especially of self-constituted authorities are attributable alone, to an overbearing conceit of themselves, to a cherished idea of their greatness and their might, simply because of their official elevation, or presumed superiority. Many are mighty both by hereditary and acquired distinctions, both by talent and advancement in the kingdoms of the world and in the kingdoms of God, who are

yet possessed of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price. And Doeg, with all his might as the chief servant of Saul, in the possession of such a spirit, would have claimed the highest respect, instead of being here addressed in the language of reproach, "Why boasteth thou, &c., &c." He boasted or exalted himself in mischief. The original term here rendered mischief, denotes the breaking of some established order or preconceived design, plan, or the like. It is applicable to all the acts of disorderly and wicked men, especially to such as disturb and distract society at large, and injure or destroy the peace and prosperity of individuals. The mischief which Doeg had done, and to which particular reference is here made, was his unjust accusation of Abimelech the high priest, and his cruel treatment of him and of his associates in the priesthood, "yea of the inhabitants of Nob in general, which was the city of the priests," 1st Sam. xxi: 9, 17, 19.

Here then, is a most affecting description of the mischief done by this mighty man. He first preferred a wrong charge against the high priest, and then he did, what the footmen, runners, or light-armed guard or attendants of Saul were afraid to do, yea, he even exceeded the command of the king, by extending his cruelty to the whole population of the city of the priests, to the women, the children, and sucklings. Here certainly, was mischief most appalling, widespread and ruinous. Mischief in accusing wrongfully before an excited ruler, a set of men who had no means of defence, no opportunity of proving the falsehood of his accusation, mis-