

# THE MONTHLY RECORD

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## Church of Scotland

IN NOVA SCOTIA AND THE ADJOINING PROVINCES.

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

### A New Year's Sermon,\*

By the Rev. J. R. Macduff, one of the Ministers of the City of Glasgow.

THE TWO MOMENTOUS WORDS.

"Time."—1 Cor. 7: 29. "Eternity."—Is. 57: 15.

We are called on, this day, to ponder these two words of awful importance, as we enter on the duties and responsibilities of a new epoch of existence. Another year! It is a fresh renewal of our grant of life by life's great Proprietor!—it is the extension of our season of grace by "the God of all grace!" Let us improve the solemn anniversary. Let us begin the year with the impressive feeling, that it may be our last! That it will be so with some, who can doubt? As we state the well-warranted conjecture, thought travels to the bedside of the invalid, or fixes on the furrowed brow and hoary locks of age. But let us not turn away from ourselves the entertaining of the startling possibility. Let each ask, "Lord, is it I?" If I be indeed the first tree marked to fall; if mine be the first grave of the new year—mine the first summons,—am I ready to take my stand before the "Great White Throne?"

Let us, then, by the help of God's Spirit, ascend this new eminence in *Time's* highway, to survey the grandeur of *Eternity*. In doing so, we propose to make some brief reflections,

I. On *Time* and its preciousness; and

II. On *Eternity* and its magnitude. And may we have grace given us solemnly to ponder whither this ceaseless roll of days, and

weeks, and months, and years, is so rapidly hurrying us!

In contemplating the preciousness of time, we observe,—

1. *Time is short*.—The scarcity of anything enhances its value. The gem and the ore are prized and treasured in very proportion to their rarity; while, on the other hand, whatever is found in the great storehouses of nature in lavish abundance, we think comparatively little of. So it is with *Time*. Its brevity makes its every moment precious. "Threescore and ten years" cannot admit of extravagant waste; reckless prodigality! They rather demand that every "crumb and fragment" be gathered and stored, that nothing be lost. Life's longest retrospect is but a dream—a series of confused and distorted images, appearing "but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night!" What is the estimate even of the wrinkled pilgrim who has measured out his century?—"The days of the years of my pilgrimage are few and evil!" Compare the duration of human existence with other objects around us. The everlasting mountains have, from their ancient seats, watched a hundred generations in succession to their tombs. The sun has run his race for six thousand years. The moon, with her starry retinue, has held on her undeviating march for the same period; and with no visible signs of decay, "this day they stand as God originally ordained them." But what, in comparison with these, is the limits of man's being? A span! a vapour! a cloud! a sleep! the eagle's flight! the

\* This beautiful discourse appeared nine years ago in the Edinburgh *Christian Magazine*, and will probably be new to almost all our readers. We reprint it here as at once appropriate to the season and as affording a favorable specimen of the style of one of the most rising and popular ministers of the Church of Scotland.—[ED. M. R.]