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"IF I FORGET TREE, O JERUSALEM! LET MY RIGHT HAND FORGET ITS CUNNING."—PS. 137: 5.

SERMON,

Preached before the Synod of the Maritime Provinces in connection with the Church of Scotland, assembled in Montreal, on the 13th day of June, 1875.

BY REV. PATRICK GRAY, OF KINGSTON, ONT.

I. John, III. 3, 18, 23—"My little children, * * * * believe in the name of God's son Jesus Christ, and love one another as He gave us commandment.

Here in the simplest and most persuasive language is that state of mind and feeling of the soul pressed upon those who bear the name of Christ—that state of mind and feeling toward God and man which forms the perfect character of the ransomed of the Lord, the moral elevation, the spiritual worth, and the glorious beauty of the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

A legendary memorial of the later life of John has been often told, but may bear repetition, were it for nothing else than the story's entire accordance with, and the light it casts upon the spirit that pervades and fills this whole epistle of the last of the Saviour's personal followers. In extreme old age, the fiery zeal of his ardent youth all subdued, no longer flashing in ambitious aspiring to pre-eminence, or flaming in indignation at disrespect shown to his Master, the Son of Thunder burns only in love. "When all capacity to teach and work is gone,

when there is no strength even to stand, the spirit still retains its power to love, and the lips are still open to repeat without change or variation the command which summed up all His Master's will, "Little children, love one another." A misunderstanding of the Saviour's word, "if I will that He tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" gave rise to another legend that John did not die at all, but is only slumbering, moving the grave mound with his breath till the final return of the Lord. The fond fiction, if not true of himself, is surely so of his writings, by which He being dead yet speaks, and wields an undying influence in the world from age to age—feeding still afresh the lamp of love, perpetuating in the hearts of Christians the divine image of their Saviour, and drawing forth ever anew the fervent response to His promise, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

On such an occasion as this is, could we do better than consider this new commandment, which is also the old, this message that was heard from the beginning, this command which enfolds all His commandments, "that we should believe in name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another"? Could we do better than to lay it out in the form in which the old apostle put it, and follow the thoughts suggested by the simple words, "My little children—believe—love one another."