

THE MONTHLY RECORD,

—OF THE—

Church of Scotland

—IN—

NOVA SCOTIA, NEW BRUNSWICK AND ADJOINING PROVINCES.

VOLUME XXVI.

AUGUST, 1881.

NUMBER VIII.

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning."—Psalm 137, 4-5.

SERMON PREACHED

before the Synod at New Glasgow, by
the Retiring Moderator, the

REV. R. BURNET.

(CONCLUDED.)

V. MATT. 3.

Receiving the commandments of the Lord Jesus, and acting on them, "blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

This, the fifth link in the spiritual development of Christ's people, is to receive a new, and rather an uncommon gloss, in this exposition. Among the Jews the word had two meanings, *the pardon of injuries and alms giving.*

Following the analogy of its kindred Hebrew rendering, we have concluded that its coming from *il-el, to cry, or lament grievously*, that it has reference to Aman's own cry, and lamentation. And the more so, as it also refers to be in pain as a woman in travail. A personal grief,—a personal misery—we interpret the expression, therefore, as meaning, "Blessed are they who have mercy on themselves; for they shall obtain mercy."

When an individual has found that the doctrines of the Lord Jesus are sweet to his taste, refreshing, and instructive to his intellectual and emotional nature, he exhibits a pity and compassion towards himself, which most theological writers and expositors of Divine truth,

have attributed as being expressed towards others.

The merciful man, it is said, enters into the miseries of his neighbour. What we say is, that it is more consonant with the spiritual teaching of the Lord Jesus, and with the grand object, He had in view, in that teaching, to attribute the manifestation of mercy to the individual himself. People are often thus merciful to themselves, who are not merciful from just motives. When a man's sins afflict him,—when he loses caste among his fellow-men—when from his vices, worldly interests fail him, and property and comfort are both sacrificed at the shrine of ungodly lust, he may, and often does turn. Such a turning, however, has not the weighty motives of the Gospel. He repents, because his reputation suffers,—because his body suffers—because an accusing conscience renders him uncomfortable. These are all too low. One motive, and one alone, can suffice to bring the sinner to be fully merciful to himself, viz: the mercy that is to be found in Christ Jesus. The man who is merciful to himself, sees himself in Christ, and his sinfulness as inflicting an injury, not on himself merely, but on the blessed master. Whenever our sins are seen and viewed in Christ, a sinner turns from his sins, is merciful to himself, and endeavours after new obedience. "For they shall obtain mercy." The usually received gloss is, "whatever mercy a man shows to another, God will take care to show the same to him." To say,