

THE MONTHLY RECORD,

OF THE

Church of Scotland

IN

NOVA SCOTIA, NEW BRUNSWICK AND ADJOINING PROVINCES.

VOLUME XXIII.

OCTOBER, 1877.

NUMBER X.

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

CHRIST MAGNIFIED IN MY BODY

PHILIPPIANS I. 20.

BY J. C. V.

We all see in some points what St Paul must have meant by this expression. It was a thought frequently present with him. We find it, for example, in one of his Epistles to the Church of Corinth, where he speaks of "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in his body;" in other words, of being made in this world like Jesus in his death, of living as it were a dying life, of "dying daily," as he elsewhere expresses it—of holding his life always in his hands, having it constantly threatened, and battered, and undermined, and expecting it day by day to be actually taken away—that so the life of Jesus, his risen life, the power of his resurrection and of his constant presence in his people, may be displayed in him; shown forth, in its marvellous strength and reality, by enabling him to suffer on and yet also to live on; to bear anything and everything, and to be destroyed by nothing until the appointed day of his change come, and he who has been faithful on earth unto death is admitted into the life which is above death and beyond death for ever. This is something of what is expressed when he says that Christ shall be magnified in his body, whether by life or by death. If he lives, if his earthy life is protracted through toils so constant and sufferings so intense, this shows the supporting hand of the risen, the immortal Saviour. There must be some marvellous power out of and above him, or he must long ago have sunk under such pressure. There must be One above, who comforts him under all his tribulation. There must be One above who communicates a strength not his own to do and to suffer for his sake. There must be One above whose grace

is sufficient for him; sufficient to keep him meek under provocation, courageous under intimidation, and steadfast in the face of danger. Christ is thus magnified (not made great but shown to be great) in his body by life. And if death comes, as come it must one day, to close his course, if confession is to end in martyrdom, and many hairbreadth escapes are to issue in a death by violence; then he who gives courage still, gives comfort still, gives hope and patience, love and gratitude still, will then not least but most be honoured and magnified in his body; he who gives his life gives his all; and the poor, tortured, mangled frame shall be used not more a sacrifice to Christ's glory than a testimony to Christ's power. Christ who makes him willing to die for him; Christ who gives him grace, courage, and constancy to die for him, shall be magnified in him still, magnified in his body, as by life, so by death.

Such was the meaning of the words before us for St. Paul himself. Have they any meaning for us also, my beloved brethren; for us who live in days when the fires of martyrdom are extinguished, and when the still more tremendous conflicts of the latter day have not yet set in? Let us bring them home to our own circumstances, to our own lives, to our own hearts, and what do they say?

Christ shall be magnified in my body. It is in the power of a Christian—so the words import—to magnify Christ, that is, to show the greatness of Christ, in his body. We can all think of some ways of doing this.

Shall I speak of temperance? of the manner in which a true Christian eats and drinks to God's glory? of the moderation, yet also of the deep thankfulness, with which he partakes of God's good gifts to the body,—his food, his clothing, his sleep, his home? how he enjoys all even above other men, just because he sees something in all, some One through and above all, unseen and unregarded by others around him, who are altogether forgetting the Giver