

# THE MONTHLY RECORD

OF THE

## Church of Scotland

IN NOVA SCOTIA AND THE ADJOINING PROVINCES.

VOL. IX.

JUNE, 1863.

No. 6.

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

### SERMON.

*By the Rev. William Snodgrass, Minister of St. Paul's Church, Montreal.*

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."—*MATTHEW* vii. 24—27.

These words are in the form of a parable—a favourite mode of teaching with our Lord, simple, engaging and impressive—a similitude borrowed from a combination of realities in the natural world and human conduct, peculiarly suited to the minds of its original hearers, yet wonderfully adapted to the instruction of all men, remarkably fitted to touch and stir the heart and to hold its place in the memory.

The relation of the parable, in the text to the whole Sermon on the Mount is obvious and important. It is the great winding up, the grand practical conclusion, of that marvellous production. It is the final requirement of all the requirements urged by the mighty word—*hear and do*. It is the crowning promise of all the promises addressed to the Christian's faith—of strength, steadfastness, peace, salvation, to the wise. It is the solemn climax of all the warnings from the lips of Jesus—of weakness, trouble, confusion, destruction, to the foolish.

The distinction drawn in the parable is be-

tween two men, the one wise and the other foolish. In human estimation and in regard to ordinary affairs, wisdom is a first-rate quality: foolishness excites contempt, and sometimes pity. It is considered the part of the former to reject what is evil, and to choose and follow what is good; of the latter to do the very reverse of this. He is a wise man who seeks the best things in the most approved way, and by the most suitable means; he is a foolish man who is reckless in his aims and conduct. Soundness of judgment, promptitude of resolution, and diligence of action are found with the first; inconsiderateness, rashness, and negligence, with the second.

The Lord does not change the meaning of these terms from their common acceptation, unless in the respect, that he applies them to the most momentous of all concerns. The qualities they express are with him the highest of the kind. A man is most eminently wise or most eminently foolish, according as he turns a willing or a deaf ear to the wisdom which Christ reveals by his word. The course of the one is assuredly justified by the magnitude of the personal interest which he perceives to be at stake—the true nobility of character, the substantial peace of mind, the exalted position of safety, the unending duration of purest happiness, which are involved in his acceptance of the teaching of Jesus: the course of the other is utterly unjustifiable, because he prefers worthlessness to dignity, misery to felicity, death to life. It is agreed to be the dictate of wisdom which leads a man to build his house upon a good foundation: we unhesitatingly condemn, as outrageous folly, the erection of a dwelling-place upon a bank of shifting sand. What a pity,