

THE MONTHLY RECORD,

OF THE

Church of Scotland

IN

NOVA SCOTIA, NEW BRUNSWICK AND ADJOINING PROVINCES.

VOLUME XXV.

NOVEMBER, 1879.

NUMBER XI.

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning."—Psalm 137, 4-6.

THE DEATH OF THE SEED THE LIFE OF THE HARVEST.

A SERMON IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY BY THE
DEAN OF CHESTER.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."
—JOHN XII. 24.

It would be impossible in one sermon, or indeed in many sermons, to exhaust all the meaning that resides in these words; and yet they are words singularly suitable for the text of a detached sermon, which has no connection with any pastoral work, or with any other discourses that have preceded it in this place, or that may come after.

For we have in these words one of our Lord's proverbial utterances—we might call them parables condensed—and, as in all those sacred proverbs, the truth which He enunciates here has many sides, while yet the proverb stands out well in relief so as to invite separate attention.

At the same time it is obviously desirable that we should first see clearly what the occasion was on which these words were spoken, and so obtain a correct starting-point for the reflections which are to follow.

The occasion was remarkable, as regards both the time to which it belonged

and all the circumstances of the case. The time was very shortly before the Passion. Jesus Christ was at a great festival in Jerusalem, never to attend that festival again. "And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: the same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew; and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus."

In this incident we can hardly fail to see something prophetic. As the Jewish day is preparing to set, it would seem as if the Gentile day were already preparing to arise. As the Jews persevere in shutting the door of salvation, the Gentiles begin to knock at that door, which is Jesus Christ.

But how does our Lord treat the incident? Not altogether as we should have expected. He makes no direct answer. We are not able to ascertain whether He did grant to these Greeks the interview which they wished. There seems at first sight to be no connection between the incident and the words which the incident called forth. And may it not be worth while to ask, in passing, whether this be not a mark of naturalness, of truthfulness, and of the authenticity of this Gospel? What we should have expected would