

THE MONTHLY RECORD

OF THE

Church of Scotland

IN

NOVA SCOTIA, NEW BRUNSWICK, AND ADJOINING PROVINCES.

VOL. XXIII.

MAY, 1877.

NO. V.

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

WILL YE ALSO GO AWAY?

A MISSION SERMON BY REV. W. H. A.

"Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."—John vi. 67-69.

The People who went away from Hearing Christ—Their Modern Compeers—What was it that made them turn away from Christ—Force of the word "also"—Death and the Judgment—Anecdotes of the Hopeless Man, and the Lady who received Christ.

THESE words were connected with one of the saddest episodes in the history of our Lord. That morning's sun had seen vast multitudes of people eager to find out the Great Prophet of Nazareth, to hear more of His wisdom, and to gaze on that mysterious combination of weakness and power which He seemed, to them, to exhibit, and to be sustained by that miraculous supply which He could afford. All day long the multitude had hung upon His lips while He spoke of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, of which He was the Ambassador. Hour by hour the throng had decreased. There was something in His tone, and in the manner of His discourse, which not only failed to interest them, but which excited their prejudices.

Still the crowd decreased, and, at last, as the shadows of evening lengthened and gathered round them, He turned round with sorrow on His face, and a burden on His heart, as He said,—“Will ye also go away?” Oh, what a depth of sorrow there was in the question! He who had been to them what no one else had been, who knew the wants of the human heart, and who had been endeavouring to make those who listened to Him know them also, instead

of producing by His sermon the results He wished, saw results of an exactly opposite description. These men found nothing in His words which met their immediate fancy, and something that was out of consonance with their affections. They listened to what He said for a while, then turned their backs on Him who was the truth and the life.

They went away. And they have gone to their account. No longer can they listen to Him who ministered on the shores of Galilee. They heard the words of Him who spake as never man spake; but their day of grace passed away, and one by one, their opportunities ended, and they have gone to their account. They cannot come back to us to hear another sermon. Christ came to them. They had their opportunity, and it is past. But the thing that was done then is being done now. Christ is still gathering a multitude, drawn to Him by a variety of circumstances. Some, perhaps, are drawn by curiosity, some by an aching sense of their need.

As it was then, so it is now. In our churches and chapels large numbers of persons will still gather, and feel a certain measure of interest; but when we come to the truth which most intimately concerns them, and on the reception of which their eternal interest depends, does not the crowd diminish? do not the many turn their backs upon Him? Back they go to their old life, to their old-self-seeking and self-pleasing. Numbers go away. Souls that seemed to be attracted are repelled, and by-and-by Jesus is left surrounded only by those who have found what they need—everlasting life. There is plenty of misery to be seen now,

PLENTY OF WORLDLINESS TOO, even in quiet country districts. The saddest of all tragedies is to be seen in the history of a man whose back is turned upon God. If I had to divide humanity into two classes, I could not have a truer position than this, I could not