

THE MONTHLY RECORD

OF THE

Church of Scotland

IN NOVA SCOTIA AND THE ADJOINING PROVINCES.

VOL. IX.

JULY, 1863.

No. 7.

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

SERMON.

By the Rev. Thomas J. Crawford, D. D., one of the Ministers of St. Andrew's Parish, Edinburgh.

"Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."—2 TIMOTHY iv. 10.

THE fact here related is a very sad one; alas! that we should be obliged to add, that it is no less common than melancholy,—a hopeful professor falling from his steadfastness,—a once zealous defender of the truth, shrinking from its open maintenance in the hour of trial,—one who had "escaped from the pollutions of the world, again entangled therein, and overcome." Beautifully simple and touching is the manner in which this shameful defection is referred to. There is not a word of resentment or complaint. There is not the smallest disposition shewn to drag forth all the aggravating circumstances in the conduct of the miserable backslider. It is more in sorrow than in anger that the apostle writes. It would seem as if he were sickened at the thought of so base an instance of perfidy as he had met with. He cannot bear to dwell upon the subject. He mentions the simple fact, without comment or reflection, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."

I. As to the previous history of this person, it is but little that we are able to ascertain; but even that little is of such a kind as to stand in strange contrast with what we here read about him. In the Epistle to Philemon, (v. 24,) Demas is honourably ranked, not only among the zealous "fellow-labourers" of the apostle; and in this character he

is privileged to unite his salutations to Philemon with those of Paul himself. and other devoted Christians. Again, in the Epistle to the Colossians, (iv. 14,) we find Demas sending his greetings to the members of that Church, as one whose kind remembrance and good wishes would, as the apostle knew, be valued by them. And here, again, he is mentioned in connexion with several distinguished servants of the Lord, such as "Luke, the beloved physician," and Epaphras, who is characterized as a person of "great zeal" for the Gospel, and Mark, and Aristarchus, and Justus, whom Paul kindly speaks of as having been "a comfort to him," and warmly commends as his "fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God."

Such was the person whose fall is here recorded. Not only was he a professor of Christianity, but, as it would seem, a professor of some distinction. He was one of the teachers or evangelists of the primitive Church. He stood on the same footing in this respect with men who, by their labours or their writings, have greatly contributed to the furtherance of the Gospel. And his salutations, whether to private friends, or to associated bodies of professed believers, were not considered unworthy of a place in the very oracles of Divine truth. And yet, you see, he proved, in the end, to be a cowardly forsaker of the faith, and, for aught that we can tell, a thorough and hopeless apostate. What an alarming fact is this! How clear and full is the evidence it gives us, that "the heart of man is deceitful above all things!" How loud is the warning it addresses to us, "Let him who thinketh he standeth, take heed lest