

THE MONTHLY RECORD

OF THE

Church of Scotland

IN NOVA SCOTIA AND THE ADJOINING PROVINCES.

VOL. VII.

AUGUST, 1861.

No. 12.

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

Sermon,

By Rev. Dean Kirwan.

"Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth."—1 Cor. x. 24.

The possession of *happiness* is the principle and end of all our actions and passions, our pleasures and our pains—the common or universal centre, to which all animated nature is hurried by rapid and irresistible movement. Men are united in society only to procure it. The arts and sciences have been invented only to perfect it. All states and professions are so many channels in which it is sought. The great and mean, rich and poor, infancy and age, passions and talents, virtues and vices, pleasures and toils, are all engaged in the animating pursuit of it. In a word, from a people that inhabit the most civilized cities to the savage that prowls in the bosom of the wilderness; from the throne of the monarch to the hut of the most abject peasant, the world is in labor to bring forth true peace and tranquility of soul.

My object on the present occasion is not to inquire into the secret of this sublime and inexhaustible science. I am inclined, however, to believe, that if it has any existence upon this earth, it is probably in the soul of a true Christian. Nor is there any description of our brethren, however abject and forlorn, to whom this tender and consoling invitation of our blessed Lord is not oftentimes addressed with effect: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

The wisdom of the Gospel, my friends, is chiefly addressed to the heart, and therefore

is easily understood by all. It is in touching that it enlightens us, in touching that it persuades. Directed by the light of faith, the eye of the true Christian is intensely fixed on the great sphere of eternity. He hears the solemn voice of his religion, which tells him that in man there are two distinct beings, the one material and perishing, the other spiritual and immortal. He knows and contemplates the rapid advance of that futurity which is not measured by the succession of days and nights, or the revolution of years and ages. Before these profound and magnificent impressions all worldly glory fades. No interests can possess or transport his heart, but those to which he is invited from above. No, not a desire in his breast, not a movement in his life; no evil in his apprehension, or happiness in his conception, that refers not to eternity; he is all immensity of views and projects; and hence that nobility of spirit, that calm, majestic indifference which looks down on the visionary enterprises of men, sees them, unstable and fleeting as the waves of a torrent, pressed and precipitated by those that pursue, and scarce tell you where they are, when you behold them no more: hence likewise that equality of soul, which is troubled at no reverse or vicissitude of life, which knows not those tormenting successions, those rapid alternations of pleasure and pain, so frequent in the breast of worldlings; to be elevated by the slightest success, depressed by the slightest reverse, intoxicated by the slightest puff of praise, inconsolable at the least appearance of contempt, reanimated at a gleam of respect, tortured by an air of coldness and in-