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"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem! let my right hand forget its cunning."—Ps. 137, v. 5.

SERMON,

Preached before the Synod of Nova Scotia and P. E. Island, in connection with the Church of Scotland, in St. Andrew's Church, Pictou, on Wednesday, 29th June, 1864, by the Retiring Moderator, the Rev. Wm. McMillan.

"And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."—MATTHEW XVI. 18.

THE Church of God has always been His peculiar care. He has paid dearly for her whom, and can never be indifferent to her interests. His revealed Word abounds with warnings and encouragement to her. Her various characteristics are there graphically described by the most striking figurative language. Her sweet humility and divine fragrance are portrayed by the contrast of the lily with the thorn," in reference to her; her wisdom and healthy vigour, by her "looking forth as the morning;" her comeliness and beauty, by the "silvery light of the moon;" her purity and brightness by the "clearness of the sun;" and her awe-inspiring majesty, by the "terribleness of an army with banners." But in the critical period in which we live, when, not only in the old, but also in the new world, there are "wars and rumours of wars;" dark clouds on every side in the political horizon; nations almost everywhere in distress and perplexity; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth;—when there is more than this—when the gospel truths are openly and boldly denied and disavowed

—when the assailants of "the law and gospel" can obtain refuge and sympathy within the bosom of the Church, whose fair fabric they have endeavoured to level with the dust,—when Atheism and infidelity find utterance not only in the blasphemies of the ignorant, but leaven the philosophy, the morals and literature of the learned,—when the enemy, with some plausibility, scoffingly predicts that Christianity, after having its day, must pass away to be among the superstitions that were;—amid all these evils, existing and threatened, in addition to the other glorious features of the Church, how encouraging, how comforting, nay, how necessary, to meditate upon her stability, her perpetuity and indestructibility, that we may maintain her honour, and fully realize that, amid the changes and decay of other institutions, we have in her a sure and stable refuge.

It is not our intention here to discuss the vexed question *who or what* this Rock is on which our Lord promised to build his Church. Let it suffice that, whether it be Christ Himself, as contrasted with Peter; whether it be the "divine nature," just admitted by Peter; or Peter himself, honoured for this confession, by being made the instrument of laying the foundation of the Church on the day of Pentecost;—whether it be one or other of these that is here meant, it is quite contrary to the testimony of Scripture, that Peter was, in any capacity, exalted above his Apostolic brethren; and further, whatever may be the reference of the text, the plain and explicit teaching of Scripture is, that Christ, in his Prophetic, Priestly, Mediatorial and Regal capacity, is the foundation of the Church—that