

# THE MONTHLY RECORD

OF THE

## Church of Scotland

IN NOVA SCOTIA AND THE ADJOINING PROVINCES.

Vol. IX.

AUGUST, 1863.

No. 8.

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

### SERMON.

*Preached at the opening of the Synod of the Church of Scotland, at Charlottetown, P. E. Island, on the 24th June, 1863. by the Rev. Simon McGregor, M. A., Retiring Moderator.*

"And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee. And when the ark rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel.—NUMBERS x. 35, 36.

HE who undermines the faith of the Christian world, in the genuineness and authenticity of the Books of Moses, deprives the Church of God of some of her noblest prayers and anthems, and of many of her choicest experiences. Age after age, has she been accustomed to look back upon that wilderness journey, and each successive age has been gathering deeper lessons of instruction, from the dealings of God with his ransomed inheritance in the exodus, the journey, and the final possession of Canaan. The whole history has indeed become embalmed in the heart of Christendom; the places, scenes and events have become part and parcel of our holiest utterances. We have gathered our illustrations of the Christian life from this source; ten thousands, in every age, have hither come for instruction, and millions have gained patience, hope, resignation, and fortitude, from that wilderness journey, because they always believed the narrative to have been real, and received the history, simply as coming from Him who cannot err. Yet if it be fabulous,—how beautiful the fable! If it be a dream—how noble and pure its utterances, if we be-

lieve it other than it professes to be—the Word of the living God. Strange, truly that so many should have lived and died, whose lives it aided in making holy, and whose deaths it contributed to render calm, peaceful and happy! And might we not reasonably expect that any attempt to lay hands upon this noble Christian treasure, should have been vigorously resisted,—that the blow aimed at this sacred and sublime fabric, should have reverberated through the whole of Christendom, and summoned the friends of Christianity to arise in its defence. And nobly and well, has the defence been made—the treasure has been safely guarded—the noble edifice has been but strengthened, and the most distant generations may still come forward, as did their fathers, and draw from this sacred fountain, joy, comfort, peace. From how many hearts, during every such attack upon the Word of God, hearts, loving His Word, and leaning upon it for comfort, and trusting in it for everything worth enjoying, has risen the earnest prayer, "Arise, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee!" How often, too, has the earnest Christian heart, fearing that by impiety, God might be provoked to forsake his Church, uttered fervently the resting prayer. "Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel."

The passage before us is one of no ordinary interest in the history of the wilderness journey of the Church of God. Already had she experienced many deliverances. Safely had the Red Sea been crossed. The thirsty multitude quenched their thirst at Marah's sweetened stream. The heavens let fall the