

THE MONTHLY RECORD

OF THE

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

IN NOVA SCOTIA AND THE ADJOINING PROVINCES.

VOL. X.

APRIL, 1864.

No. 4.

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

CONCLUDING PORTION OF THE FUNERAL SERMON

*Preached in St. Matthew's Church, Halifax,
on February 21st, by the Rev. G. M. Grant,
with reference to the late Rev. John Scott.*

"Our fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever?"—ZECH. i. 5.

SUFFICIENT cause have we, as a congregation, to acknowledge that they remain not long here. The other day I saw, in our monthly periodical, an address, presented forty years ago on behalf of this congregation, to one who had then kindly supplied it, when destitute of regular ministrations, for six months. Not one of the Trustees who signed that address is now living; yea, not only dead, but almost universally forgotten. One of our present elders remarked to me that only a single name was familiar to him. And, since our bells rang in this New Year, we have followed to the grave one of the oldest merchants of this city, who was one of the oldest members of this Church. And now we have just come from the obsequies of him who so long, as your father and prophet, went in and out before you. And here, and now, it is but meet that we should take a last look at what he has been to us all—a grateful retrospect of his faithful services. In the pulpit, the language of flattery, even of eulogy, is quite out of place: but it would, indeed, be a frigid etiquette that forbade a generous acknowledgment and appreciation; and such may well come from me; for whatever he may have been to others, to me he was never anything but kindness and consideration itself—a very father unto me in all our inter-

course. To say that he had faults, shortcomings of temper and character, is just to say that he was mortal; and far be it from us to search out or dwell upon any such. Excellencies, rare excellencies, he had; and these could be fully known only by those who knew him long and intimately. His chief peculiarity, and the one which I believe was the root cause of all the misunderstandings about him, was his dignified reserve—a reserve which shrank from laying bare his own inner life, and from the noisy manifestation and even exhibition of the feelings and troubles of others. Hence, many who did not know the real grounds of his conduct in particular cases, unhesitatingly condemned him because they attributed to him unworthy motives which really had never entered his mind. And as he would never condescend to explain, and would never draw back from a position he deemed right, the misunderstanding continued. I myself know of cases in which his conduct was loudly censured by men who, if they had known wherefore he had so acted, would have approved, or at least have been silent. You say that he should have spoken freely, and have given his reasons. Perhaps he should. Perhaps he was not asked: ministers are generally judged without being heard in their own defence. But, after all it is a lofty principle that rests upon character—that says, let my character speak for me: I will not anticipate objections: I will do what I conceive to be right; and if it be right, in the end God will vindicate me. And the lesson we should learn from this, is, to be slow in judging others, especially when we have not heard