

THE
Home and Foreign Record
OF
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF THE LOWER PROVINCES.

SEPTEMBER, 1866.

SERMON.

Preached before the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces of British North America, by Rev. Geo. Christie, Moderator.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF SYNOD.

"Even now are there many Antichrists."—1 John ii. 18.

The wheels of Providence are constantly moving. As they revolve, they bring to light the events by which each particular epoch in prophecy is distinguished: and when these are before us, then we know that the time marked by the spirit of prophecy has arrived. Thus the apostle reasoned respecting the epoch which had its beginning in the christian era. The Providence of God had been bringing forth, one after another of the great prophetic seasons to which the prophecy pointed, until the world had actually entered upon the last. And now the apostle, looking abroad over the world and the church, is made to understand, from the "signs of the times," that the dispensation under which God designed to establish the kingdom of his Son upon the earth, by the overthrow of all the enemies of the church, had arrived. "It is the last time." The sure indication of this was afforded in the exertions of the enemies of Christ to corrupt the minds of men, and lead up a rebellion against the Saviour. "There are many Antichrists." That such a state of things might be expected was a fact not new to any who had acquaintance with the word of God. "There shall come a falling away first, &c." 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4. "Ye have heard that Antichrist shall come."

The word antichrist is used only by this apostle. But both in the scriptures, and as used at the present day, it denotes the system of doctrine which embodies the leading errors referred to by Paul, Peter and John, while it also refers to the personage known as the head and representative of that system. As used by this apostle, it evidently denotes every form of doctrine or practice which tends to oppose the authority of Christ and the system of truth revealed in the word of God. Some of these are particularly specified in this epistle; and while giving the distinguishing marks of antichrist, the language is such as to establish certain general principles that might, at any time, be useful to enable the people of God to guard against the dangers that always threaten the church when false doctrines are taught. John as well as Paul, under the light of the Holy Spirit, could see that, even in their day, the elements of deadly evil were in existence and operation. "The mystery of iniquity doth already work." In the meantime, said the apostle, it is under the restraining power of God's Almighty hand. But the seed is being sown, nay, already we see it growing,—threatening to the church days and years of bitter grief. Many of the different kinds of seed appeared to the unskilful as likely to produce food pleasant to the eye and much to be desired. But the apostles, taught by God, assured them that the harvest time would be a day of bitter grief.

It seems to me not unsuitable to such an occasion as the present that we should enter somewhat particularly into this subject,