

THE MONTHLY RECORD

OF THE

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

IN NOVA SCOTIA AND THE ADJOINING PROVINCES

VOL. X.

DECEMBER, 1864.

No. 12.

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

A Help to the Enquiring:

BEING AN

ABSTRACT OF A SERMON,

By the Rev. A. W. Herdman, Picton.

[PUBLISHED BY REQUEST]

“Make your calling and election sure.”—2 Peter i. 10, middle clause.

THE diligent Christian is alive to the state of his soul. A slip here is fatal: negligence ruinous; procrastination wasteful. Diligence alone maketh rich. While many are without light presuming, and others in doubt half their days, the attentive believer is at pains examining his state and collecting such evidence as may comfort him now, and fortify him against the trial awaiting him. Accordingly, he resembles the heir investigating the title-deeds of property, or the steward examining the state of his accounts,—thus anxiously and perseveringly does he enquire into his spiritual condition, that he may avoid deception and be ready for his account.

Now, observe the order laid down by the apostle: not your election and your calling, but your calling first, and then your election. And why? Not because calling precedes election. We do not call, and then God elects us; that were preposterous and void. Election is eternal, and, with God, the secret purpose, before all worlds, of what he was about to accomplish in time; and so must be first. But because Election is in that Book of Life above, which we cannot dive into, and Calling is in that Chart on earth, which we and our children are to follow, therefore our

calling must be ascertained first, and then our election established. Observe, calling must be *first to us*, and, in all our inquiries, obviously is so. We cannot ascertain the source of the Nile without first reaching that river, and then ascending to its fountain-head. The rebel knows not whether his name has been canvassed by the authorities, or whether he may yet feel secure: but let him find it on the States' warrant, and then he knows that the discovery is made, and that he can elude search no longer. So we cannot read our election. To go up to heaven, and there ransack the Lamb's Book of Life—that is not permitted us; nor by chance shall we alight upon it. But we can search the record of God's revealed Word, and there ascertain our calling or our conversion; that once established, we then infer our election. Wherefore the apostle's method is one that we must follow in our investigation, not the first in point of time with God, but the first for us to follow—calling, and then election.

Again, we are not required to make sure our calling to God, but to clear it *to ourselves*. He knows it, and needs no evidence; but we require certainty, and therefore must collect evidence—Scriptural grounds for our holding ourselves called or converted persons. How many take this for granted! Some deny that it can ever be made out; but “prove your selves,” “Know ye not your own selves whether Christ be in you or no?” had never been written were it impossible to prove our conversion. On what evidence, then, are we to rest it? On our love. Were we conscious of this affection—of love to God and delight,