

MONTHLY RECORD

OF THE

Church of Scotland

IN NOVA SCOTIA AND THE ADJOINING PROVINCES.

JULY, 1859.

"IF I FORGET THEE, O JERUSALEM! LET MY RIGHT HAND FORGET HER CUNNING."—*Psalms 137, v. 5.*

Sermon,

Preached by Rev. Dr. Rice, of Chicago, Moderator of the Old School General Assembly, which met this year in Indianapolis, on the 19th May.

(From the "Presbyterian.")

"I have been most unexpectedly called upon," said the preacher, "to address this venerable Assembly, and the friends convening with them in this congregation; and I invite your attention to the portion of the word of God found in 2 Cor. v. 7, 'For we walk by faith, not by sight.'" Proceeding at once to the discussion, he said:—"The term *walk* is, in this epistle and elsewhere in the New Testament, used to express the idea of the conversation and conduct of men. To walk as children of light was equivalent to: maintain the conversation and deportment of Christians—to walk according to this world, is to act in conformity with its maxims and example—to walk by faith, is to live and act under the influence of Christian principles and motives *really believed*. Now it is declared of Christians that they 'walk by faith.'

Two topics are presented for consideration.

1st. What is faith?

2d. Faith as the controlling principle of the Christian life.

1. Faith, in its most general sense, is reliance upon testimony. It is the most extensive channel of our knowledge. There are three sources from which we derive our knowledge. *Consciousness*, our *sense*, and *faith* in the testimony of others. The evidence of the first two we cannot call in question—that of the third it is *unnatural* to doubt. We

can not call in question the testimony of consciousness or of our senses. God has so constituted us, and he has also made as so, that we cannot readily resist the tendency of the mind to rely upon the testimony of others.

Faith is *natural*; children readily believe, and it is not until after deceived, that they acquire the habit of doubting. Man cannot doubt clear testimony. You cannot doubt that there is such a place as Rome.

But whilst this is true, as there is a difference in the clearness and strength of evidence, there are degrees of strength of faith: and this, too, is affected by the state of mind in regard to the thing believed. We do not readily believe what we do not wish to be true, and it takes stronger proof in such case to compel belief.

Faith, in a religious sense, is simply belief of the testimony of God. It may relate to the *past*—as it is 'by faith we know that the worlds were made:' it may relate to the *present*, or to the *future*: and the thing that is the object of faith, is simply what God has borne testimony to. We are not bound to believe that to which he has not testified, or of which he has given us no proof. *E. g.* The Scriptures declare that there is one God, and yet a *Trinity*. God is *one* in one sense, and *three* in another: this any one can take in as a fact. If you start the question, how can he or does he so exist, you start a difficulty, and raise a point which is not an *object of faith*, because God has not yet testified as to the *mode*. The Scriptures rather take for granted than assert that there is one infinite, perfect and glorious God; even a child can understand and believe this: but if