

MONTHLY RECORD



OF THE Church of Scotland in Nova Scotia and the adjoining Provinces.

"IF I FORGET THEE, O JERUSALEM! LET MY RIGHT HAND FORGET HER CUNNING."—PSALM 137, iv.

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INTERESTING INTELLIGENCE.

Cumming's view of Church Establishments.

It is taken for granted by those who are easily led by the bold and vehement opinions of others, who set themselves up as the advocates of popular rights and liberties, that there is something inherent and corrupt in the very nature of a church establishment. On the contrary, we believe it is clearly shown, from the history of the past, that christianity is never more successful, as when its objects are wisely and efficiently carried out in union with the state.

To us, this seems the only proper system in which, in a christian country, every man connected with the Church of Christ, should be carried on "decently and in order." Let us into God's earthly fold men of all characters will find their way, as well among the wild as among the tame; for the Kingdom of God is compared to a net that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind. The wicked and designing men will from time to time creep into the Church among the sheep, as well as in Established Churches, and by the shepherds of the sheep, and by and by they will become themselves far more anxious to become members of a party than to reform manners. And hence divisions arise—introduction of strife, confusion, anarchy, where peace, order and order ought ever to reign.

It is our theory. The most, however, that can possibly be made of this subject is, in the absence of direct scriptural instructions upon the point, it becomes purely a matter of opinion what system is the best. We are here left to the exercise of their judgments, as much so as in the plan of the outward form of a place of worship, the dress and letting of the pews, or the style and pattern of the minister's

however this may be—whatever system men may hold with respect to the

constitution of a Church of Christ, its connexion or non-connexion with the state, one thing we think is certain, namely, that a difference of sentiment in this respect ought never, under any circumstances, where this is the sole and only matter in dispute, be made the foundation of strife and bitterness. "Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh." Zeal for a party ought never so to blind our eyes, as that we cannot see the image of Christ in our redeemed brethren who may in some things differ from us. There ought to be no bad feeling on the part of those who profess to be the common followers of Him, who has strictly enjoined on all who are called by his name to "love one another."

And yet alas! it is too often the case with those who, following the same identical creed, differ only in trifles light as air, to adopt the opposite maxim, and instead of loving, to hate each other,—a precept worthy only of the Gospel of Satan, who, it is well known, was the first dissembler. Upon a subject which, in any really vital sense, is a matter of little or no importance, parties should charitably agree to differ; for it must be clear as noonday, to any one who regards the matter with an unprejudiced mind, that, in its ultimate issues, the deepest interest involved in the question affects only the manner in which the ministers of religion are to be paid; and whoever wishes well to religion must feel that, if no sure and adequate provision is made for its teachers, the good work, now left to the instrumentality of men of like wants as well as passions with others, is liable from many petty causes to be obstructed—at least, that it cannot otherwise be so efficiently carried on.

Let us hear what our friend Dr. Cumming of London, says upon this subject. He, like ourselves, though living out of Scotland, and deriving no pecuniary benefit whatever from its endowments or patronage, still on principle clings to the idea of an establish-

ment, as the wisest and best arrangement for furthering the ends of the Gospel of peace. And here we cannot help remarking that it is to be regretted, that the eloquent Doctor cannot for a brief period be spared from his many pressing avocations, to come over and help us here in Nova Scotia, as a deputation. Were it in his power, we are sure he would most willingly visit and encourage us; but in the meantime we must rest contented with his written opinions, which are precisely the same, as those he would advocate with all his far famed powers of oratory, were he actually in the above capacity, to visit our ice-bound shores.

The following quotation is from the very popular little volume, only recently issued, which has been already noticed in your pages, entitled "The End," a book which, like all his other numerous and stirring productions, so well adapted to the present age, is well worthy of a careful perusal.

Speaking of the rapid decline of Romanism throughout the world at the present moment, Dr. Cumming takes occasion to make the following observations. "I believe in my conscience—and if some differ with me I regret it—that a National Church with a faithful and devoted ministry, whether on this side the Tweed or on the other, is a national blessing. And as long as in that National Church such noble Articlors as the Thirty-nine, or such a pure Confession as the Scotch, are echoed and ministered from the pulpit, so long it is a privilege, and to me a duty as well as a privilege, to adhere. I love my own Church,—I love my National Church; I think it combines that amount of freedom, and yet of deference to authority that is most important. We may depend upon it in the present day we need not be afraid of what some are frightened at, the erastian power; that is, the Queen's power; we need not be afraid of what others call, again, the power of the people. But the power that I dread, the dark shadow that I shrink from as perilous in these times, is the power of the priest, or