

# THE MONTHLY RECORD

OF THE

## Church of Scotland

IN NOVA SCOTIA AND THE ADJOINING PROVINCES.

VOL. VIII.

DECEMBER, 1862.

No. 12.

"IF I FORGOT THEE, O JERUSALEM! LET MY RIGHT HAND FORGET ITS CUNNING."—Ps. 137, 4-5.

### The Benefits of the Protestant Reformation.

#### A DISCOURSE

PREACHED BY THE REV. A. W. HEEDMAN,

In *St. Andrew's Church, Pictou, on the 20th December, 1860, being the day of Tricentenary, and now published by desire.*

"The time of reformation."—HEB. IX. 10.

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION may be compared to the Banyan tree of India, whose roots are so many, and whose branches are so large, and under whose shadow a whole regiment of soldiers may be sheltered; or to the vine from Egypt, whose boughs shot out by the river, and whose branches extended to the sea, and whose shadow covered the land—shelter and nourishment both proceeded from her. And now that for three hundred years we and our fathers have sat under her venerable shade, shall we be unmindful of her labour, or ungrateful for her refreshment? Before the Reformation was there a tree, but it was the poisonous nightshade, whose deadly influence tainted the atmosphere; "hew her down," was the command given to the watchers, and they did cleave her,—howbeit her root was to remain "for a time and times and half a time." In her stead was planted another tree of goodly proportions, whose seed was small as the mustard, but whose trunk waxed great, and the birds lodged in its branches.

Apart from metaphor: Before the Reformation, there was a Church, but it was corrupt—a system of Christianity, but it was a distortion—a Bible, but it was in the Latin

language—and a little preaching, though it has been proved that many of the clergy knew not the Scriptures, and few of them could tell "whose son David was"—a species of literature no doubt existed, but it was locked up in a dead tongue, and the mass of the people dwelt in darkness. Then, gross darkness covered our fatherland, the doctrines of salvation were almost unknown, the subject of a sinner's justification by faith was shrouded or lost, and what the pulpit maintained was, "by the offerings of the saints is a place in heaven procured, and Christ's merits are open to those only that pay into the treasury of the Church." In doctrine corrupt, in practice she was no better. Indulgences were sold for money, and the lives of the clergy were impure. When Luther, in his zeal for Catholicism, went to Rome expecting to see purity and perfection, he found only corruption and immorality. The Court of Rome he compared to a cage of unclean birds, and bewailed its immoral condition. If such was the state of things in headquarters, the kingdoms and provinces then subject to Rome (and her influence extended everywhere,) could not be expected to be in a better condition; and thus, in short, in doctrine and in morals, corruption and abomination prevailed. Then there was need of a reform, of a reformation from ignorance and from immorality, of a purer faith and of a holier life. This reform took place upwards of three centuries ago, under Luther in Germany, Calvin in Switzerland, Latimer in England, and Knox in Scotland, and is properly a reformation, and neither a revolution nor a destruction. The times mentioned in the text