

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, v. 5.

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INTERESTING INTELLIGENCE.

Christians the Salt of the Earth.

What salt does for meats our Lord tells us Christians ought to do for the rest of mankind. By diffusing amongst them the purifying doctrines of the Gospel, by exhibiting before them an example of whatsoever things are pure, honest, lovely, and of good report—by their persuasions, by their remonstrances, their warnings and entreaties—in short, by every means within their power, it should be their earnest endeavour to impregnate them with the spirit of our holy faith, and to preserve their morals from the corruption and putrefaction of sin. And that Christianity, when thus brought home by the agency of true believers to the hearts and consciences of others, carries with it such a purifying and preserving power, must, I think, be evident to every one who looks around him, and contemplates the condition of his fellow-men. Behold mankind when they have not been seasoned with the salt here spoken of, and what a lamentable spectacle meets the eye!—what a painful picture of corruption! I might appeal to heathen lands for proofs of this, but alas we shall find them in abundance much nearer home. In what a degraded and painful condition do we find vast masses of our own countrymen sunk! though dwelling in a land which we are apt to flatter ourselves is one of the most Christian, one of the most moral and virtuous on earth. Let us only penetrate into any of those dark and dingy quarters, with which every large town in our island abounds, and what scenes of squalor and misery, of poverty and crime, abound on all sides! Let us enter any of the dwellings, and in what state do we find the dwellers there? Men, women, and children crowded together, cursing and blaspheming at one another—and, when the means of gratifying their debased tastes are within their power, sinking themselves 'low the level of the very brutes that peish, wallowing in filth,

in drunkenness, and crime of every kind. Can we wonder that the process of corruption goes on and on—penetrates still deeper and deeper, and spreads still wider and wider, and threatens, in the end, to taint the whole community? And I fear we need not confine our survey to the large cities alone, and to the squalid thousands there. Many are the rural villages, and many the country cottages, from which we might equally draw sad proofs of the corrupting and putrifying nature of sin—of its tendency to sink man in degradation and crime. Now, what is the cause of all this? To what are we to attribute this deplorable condition of so many thousands amongst us—for deplorable it truly is in every point of view, social, moral, or religious? They dwell in the same land with ourselves, they breathe the same air, they are governed by the same laws, they enjoy the same privileges, and they speak in the same tongue. Simply to this, that the counteracting agency of the salt mentioned in our text has never been brought to bear upon them. We may find them often dwelling within the shadow of the house of God itself, but its doors they never darken, and its courts they never tread. Sabbath after Sabbath, the sound of that bell which calls upon them to meet with their fellow-men, to unite in the worship of their Maker and their God, falls upon their ear—but its summons is utterly disregarded. That day of sacred rest—that day, whose hallowed leisure from the drudgery of this weary world ought especially to call their thoughts heaven-ward—is by them misspent, if not in drunkenness and debauchery, at least in idleness and in sloth. It may be to them a day of bodily rest, but it is not one of religious instruction—it is not one of spiritual improvement. Surrounded on every side by Gospel privileges, enjoying to the fullest extent Gospel liberty, they are yet perfectly callous and indifferent, living, aye and dying too, without God and without hope in the world, as ignorant of the great truths of our faith, of God, of

Christ, of heaven and of hell, as the benighted millions of India, or the savages of Australia. And surely the important question must at once suggest itself to every right thinking man. Is there no remedy for this melancholy state of matters? Is there no way by which those abodes of moral corruption, depravity, and pollution, and at the same time of physical disease, misery, and death, may be changed into homes of purity and contentment, health and happiness? Yes, there is, and our Saviour has clearly pointed it out in our text. He has shown us the only agent sufficiently powerful to grapple with this tremendous difficulty, and sufficiently penetrating to make his entrance into the haunts of profligacy and crime, and to arrest the progress of corruption. Only introduce the salt of which He here speaks in sufficient quantity, and of pure unadulterated quality—only impregnate with it that mass of rottenness, and if it does not bring back purity and soundness, it will at least stay the downward course, it will at least arrest the progress of decay—rest assured that no salt sprinkled there will be lost. It may have but little influence over those who are so far gone as to be blunted beyond recovery—but there will at least be some whom it will be effectual to check, some minds it may enlighten ere yet they have been utterly darkened by sin, whose hearts it may soften ere yet they have been utterly hardened by sin, and whose conscience it may awaken, ere yet they have been utterly seared by long familiarity with crime. The change may require time—it may be slow, but it will be sure—once commenced, it will go on spreading on every side, each generation will be in advance of the one which preceded it, and in the end the whole community will be a gainer. There will be progress, not now towards corruption and decay, but towards purity and health. And I believe further that our Lord has not merely pointed out an effectual remedy, but has also pointed out *the only* remedy for the corrupting ten-