

# THE MONTHLY RECORD

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## Church of Scotland

IN NOVA SCOTIA AND THE ADJOINING PROVINCES.

MAY, 1860.

"I FORGOT THEE, O JERUSALEM! LET MY RIGHT HAND FORGET HER CUNNING."—Ps. 137, v.

### Sermon,

By the Rev. James C. Herdman, A. M. Senior  
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1 Samuel vii. 12. "Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it 'Ebenezer,' saying 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.'"

Notwithstanding the Lord's wonderful interpositions for Israel, from the time of Abraham onwards, they were constantly provoking Him—by profligacy or, by idolatry. In particular, the sons of Eli had led them into grossest sins, on account of which they were left to be punished by the Philistines—30,000 being slaughtered when the ark of God was taken. For attempting to retain that sacred symbol, the heathen were visited with plagues, till they were compelled to send it back. Meanwhile 20 years elapsed—long years of humiliation and extremity to the nation. But the son of Hannah was not idle; and his unwearied labours to instruct and to reform, combined with the public judgments, were blessed by God to a signal general awakening—so that we read at the 4th verse of this chapter "The children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only." The prophet now summoned all the tribes of Mizpeh, to avow their allegiance to the Most High, and to pour out their hearts before Him. The Philistines seized on this opportunity to invade the land; but, at the earnest cry of His chosen, the Hearer of prayer thundered out of Heaven, and discomfited the enemy, who were pursued by the men of Israel and smitten—as far as to Bethcar. "Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it 'Ebenezer,' saying 'Hitherto

hath the Lord helped us.'" So that, obviously, it was his design to express the gratitude which God's goodness to him and his countrymen had excited in their hearts; to perpetuate the memory of His mercies, as an encouragement to future generations to serve Him; to raise a monument, not of Israel's triumph, but of the Lord's kindness to them—His manifold loving-kindness throughout their history, but eminently in their recent experience, when in danger of extermination, and human help evidently ineffectual, a miraculous interference had saved them from destruction and humbled their oppressors in the dust. The glory, then, is ascribed to the King of kings, and nothing is attributed to the creature: secondary causes are mentioned as subservient to the great deliverance, but the Lord of hosts alone is acknowledged—He alone is exalted—as the Shepherd and Saviour of His flock.

Now, Brethren, were I, on any ordinary occasion, to attempt an application to our own case of the words 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped us,' I should deem it proper—*First*, to invite all to a review of their temporal mercies—from the beginning of their existence down to the present hour. And, since these are more in number than the grains of sand on the seashore, I would recommend their consideration in distinct classes or clusters. Thus—at *different periods*. In creation, what a place was assigned you! what powers were conferred! how many inlets of enjoyment! In infancy, what provision of love gently met, yea prevented, your wants! In childhood and youth, what care over your steps! what training and education! In riper years. Your senses and faculties have been all preserved. And has