

THE

# 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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### ECCLESIASTICAL INTELLIGENCE.

#### Memoranda

*On the Week Day Services in connexion with the celebration of the Lord's Supper.*

BY AN AGED HIGHLAND MINISTER.

The Reformation was established in Scotland in 1560, and, during a few years after that event, the Lord's Supper was dispensed with in the month in Edinburgh, and in several other cities and towns in the South, which there were Ministers, though by the Acts of Assembly, 1562, the requirement was that it should be dispensed on the first Sundays of March, June, September and December, (four times in the year) in the country, and twice in the year in the cities and burghs. There were no week services, however, appointed in connexion with it.

Before the year 1638, the zeal of the Presbyterian Ministers in favor of Gospel ordinances became so cold, owing to their constant war with Episcopacy, or their poverty became so little to dispense the Lord's Supper so frequently as they could wish, that the great Reforming General Assembly, of that year, held in Glasgow, only recommended the more frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper, leaving it to the discretion of the several Kirk Sessions to determine when its celebration would be most for the comfort and edification of the people, leaving it also to the Kirk Sessions to determine whether a previous day of humiliation on account of any enormous sins in the several parishes, would be advisable or not. The keeping of the previous Thursday, or any other day of the week, as a day of humiliation, was *permissive, not imperative*. By Act of Assembly, 1645, it was ordered that there should be a sermon on the day immediately preceding the dispensation of the Supper, to prepare people for it; and he it observed that, in those good days of the Church, every individual was obliged to communicate, or to pay a heavy fine for not communicating. It

was military discipline with the Clergy and Kirk Sessions.

The first instance known of a service on the Monday after the Communion, is that of a sermon delivered in the Kirk of Shotts, in Lanarkshire, in the summer of 1630. It having been known in the surrounding country that the Sacrament was to be dispensed on a particular Sunday in that parish, many of the more devout people went to it from considerable distances, and were much edified by the services. Some good ladies were so anxious to hear more of the Gospel, that, on Monday morning, when they had to return home, they said: "It was a pity they could not get a sermon on that day, to strengthen them on their journey." A deputation of them went to the Minister, to beg for another sermon. The honest man was tired, however, and unable to give them a sermon. He applied to his assistants, and they, too, were unprepared. But it would be a pity, they said, to disappoint the good people, and they would try to get Mr. John Livingston, a young man who had been lately licensed, and who was, at the time, a private tutor in a family in the parish, to give them a sermon. They applied to him very urgently, but he positively refused and ran away, so as to be out of their reach. He had not gone far, however, when the word of the Lord reached his conscience; he began to think he had done wrong in refusing, but what was he to do? He was not prepared to preach. "Have I been a wilderness to Israel?"—Jer. ii. 30, were the words of the Lord to him, and he, consequently, returned and preached to a large congregation in the open field. His text was from Ezekiel xxxvi., 26. There was nothing peculiarly striking in the service at first. The day had been very fine, till, all at once, a thunder storm and a great rain came on. Then the good people became more attentive to keeping themselves and their garments dry, than to the sermon. This displeased Mr. Livingston, who was doing his best in addressing them, and he, consequent-

ly, left his text and the thread of his discourse, and seized the fear and commotion among the people as an opportunity of directing their thoughts to the consternation they should be in on the great Day of Judgment; "A thunder storm and a shower of rain terrify you now," said he, "what shall be your terror and dismay on the Judgment Day, if you live and die Christless?" Upon this subject he enlarged, and the consequence was the conversion of at least 500 souls to God! The fruit showed that the Lord was not a wilderness to Israel.

Of course such a manifestation of God's grace on the Monday after the Communion, was considered by some godly Ministers and people as a call and encouragement from God to have a sermon on every Monday after Communion; and thus, by degrees, Monday sermons extended to every Parish, and the day came to be called the Thanksgiving Day after the Supper. There is no Act of Assembly rendering it imperative on Ministers to keep the Monday as a Thanksgiving day, but *practice* has made a law in the case which is stronger than an Act of Assembly would be. This is the origin of the *Monday* services.

The Friday Question Meetings and services had their origin in Inverness, 200 odd years ago. There was then in that town a very zealous Minister, an *Episcopalian*, named Mr. Alex McKenzie, who, in a kind, easy way, invited some of his people to his house for worship and Christian fellowship. In a short time so many came that the house could not contain them. The Minister was very familiar with the people, and asked the opinion of this one and that one, about the chapter read, and about cases of conscience, and christian doctrines, and marks of grace, &c. and the answers he received were agreeable to the good man. They then held their meetings in the Church, and some attended to pray, and others to scoff. The place, however, was in general notoriously wicked, and when the Communion season came, the Kirk Session deemed it advisable to appoint