

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, 12.

Vol. II.....No. 11.

HALIFAX, NOVEMBER, 1856.

2s. 6d. per ann. in advance.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The Bible and the Monks.

It is a trite but true saying that the commonest blessings are often the least valued. The air we breathe, the light which cheers and quickens us, the bread which we eat, the health we enjoy, all these and such like common blessings, being day by day renewed to us, we constantly and uniformly receive without, in too many instances it is to be feared, being fully sensible of their value, or remembering the source from which they all proceed.—The same holds true with regard to our spiritual blessings. How few there are, for example, who put a proper value on the estimable privilege of possessing a copy of the Holy Scriptures, which is the greatest blessing which heaven has conferred upon man. And yet how few think of it in this light! They would rather take up any flimsy book or newspaper that happens to come in their way than sit down with their Bible before them, and meditate upon its blessed contents, infinitely beyond all mere human productions.

We freely admit the wants of many of our people in this colony in regard to religious ordinances, and hope that they may all be supplied by the speedy arrival of our labourers. But whilst we grant that many members and friends of our beloved Church are not furnished with such regular opportunities of public worship as might be desirable, yet they have much to be thankful for, seeing that God has placed Christ's Word, or the means of attaining the Bible, in every house, however humble; and has that single gift alone, think of it as we say, conferred upon all a privilege greater than all the gold and silver in the world could purchase. "Blessed are the eyes that see the things that ye see; for I say unto you that many prophets and kings have desired to see these things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear these things which ye hear and have not heard them."

Thus, with a copy of the Scriptures in our hands, all that all men longed for through so many ages of darkness and superstition we now possess. The Bible, beginning at Genesis and ending at Revelations, is a completed volume, and repudiates further additions being made to it. What the prophets and wise men of past ages desired to look into has now been clearly made known, and in this sense there is nothing further to reveal. Hence we see the foolish claims of the simple and deluded Mormons, upon how sandy a foundation they rest. And the painful and humiliating example of mingled ignorance and folly with which we are presented in their case, shows what serious errors and delusions men who do not read their Bibles are apt to fall into. It is our firm belief that by far the greatest proportion of religious error to be found in the world is to be traced, not so much to a misunderstanding of the meaning of the Scriptures as to a total neglect of them. What was intended to enlighten the eyes and to guide the footsteps of men is too often, by the cunning craftiness of some ambitious mountebank thirsting for power or applause, converted into an instrument for blinding and bewildering them. If men will but study the Scriptures as they ought to be studied, and deserve to be studied they would not only avoid being carried about with every wind of doctrine—they would not only avoid every extravagance which the most cunning of their fellowmen can invent, but baffle even Satan himself—for we know our Saviour, on being tempted of the devil, closed his mouth at once by quoting appropriate passages from the Old Testament.

Consider for a moment the value of having a Bible: consider with what care the Holy Scriptures have been preserved, and through how many ages of darkness they have come down to us! Think of the blood that has been shed in defence of them by the martyrs of old. Consider the dangers and hardships endured by those faithful men who counted not their lives dear to them that so the sacred

oracles might be printed and circulated among the great body of the people. Reflect upon the desperate and deadly struggle of the reformers to wrest them from the bloody talons of the Church of Rome, and upon the blessed book that men, with their own eyes, might read therein their birthright to a home beyond the skies. Truly, the greatest of all miracles is the existence of this wonderful Book in the midst of us—perfect and complete in all its parts—as if it had been given only a few years ago. Yet nations have begun and ended since the Bible was first written; and it has passed through many a fiery trial without hurt.—Time, which destroys all things, only strengthens the hold which it has obtained over men's minds. The very preservation of the Bible seems a miracle, when it is considered that through so many generations everything has been done by wicked and designing men to corrupt its matter and weaken its influence.

The extreme care bestowed by the Jews in preserving the works of their inspired writers is well known; but the scrupulous regard paid by the monks of the middle ages to the accuracy of the copies transcribed by them is, perhaps, not so generally known. Not only in the case of the Bible but other books, was the greatest care and diligence enforced in copying exactly from the originals. We are informed it was a common practice for the scribe at the end of his copy, to adjure all who transcribed from it to use the greatest care, and to refrain from the least alteration of word or sense. "I adjure you who transcribe this book, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by his glorious coming, who will come to judge the quick and the dead, that you compare what you transcribe and diligently correct it by the copy from which you transcribe it—this adjuration also—and insert in your copy."

"The rules of the writing chambers also," says Merryweather, a recent author upon the this subject, "impressed this upon the Monks, and directed that all the brothers