

THE
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OF

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF THE LOWER PROVINCES.

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HOME EVANGELIZATION.

How to evangelize the lapsed classes is in old and densely peopled countries one of the most difficult problems of the age,—more puzzling to the christian philanthropist than even the evangelization of the heathen in India, Africa, on the Isles of the Pacific. In the city of London the “home heathen” number a million of souls! In many other large cities the proportion is equally appalling. Bright and beautiful spots gleam occasionally out of the darkness, through the blessing of Heaven on the labours of City Missionaries and Home Missionaries; but the darkness continues to prevail all around, and often increases in the face of energetic exertions on the part of the Christian Churches.

But is there a “lapsed population” among ourselves? Is this dreadful moral night upon any considerable portion of our population? Have we “home heathen” with claims scarcely less urgent than those of the naked savage? These questions we must answer in the affirmative. The evidence is not far to seek. Any intelligent man who opens his eyes may see these evidences staring him in the face.

A few weeks ago the Halifax Young Men’s Christian Association made arrangements for ascertaining the number of our population attending Protestant Churches. The facts brought to light by this census will astonish our citizens. Probably not more than one half the number of our Protestant population, who might attend public worship do so with any degree of regu-

larity, while there are hundreds if not thousands who never enter a church door.

What is true of Halifax is no doubt equally true of St. John. Smaller towns have a large fallen and falling class. We know this to be true of Yarmouth, of Pictou, of Sydney, of Charlottetown, of Fredericton.

In all these places it will be found that “home heathenism” exists and is not decreasing.

More discouraging is the fact that in our villages and rural districts the same phenomenon prevails. Take almost any district however well cultivated spiritually, and you can hardly fail to find some specimens of “heathenism,” utter neglect of gospel ordinances, forgetfulness of God and Christ and the interest of the soul. Along the Atlantic coast, from Cape Sable to Cape Breton there are many dark spots that need the Gospel as much as any district on the coast of Africa. This assertion will perhaps sound extravagant to many readers; but it is literally true nevertheless. Facts have come within our knowledge recently that impress us deeply with the conviction that our Church has a vast work before her on our Nova Scotia Shores. It is probable that New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island are not more favourably situated in this respect than Nova Scotia; while it is notorious that Newfoundland is much less favourably situated.

What is the remedy? Or, are we to sit down quietly in the face of these awful facts, and allow the darkness to become darker still? Shall we fold our hands, shut our eyes, and allow this home heathenism to