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"IF I FORGOT THEE, O JERUSALEM! LET MY RIGHT HAND FORGET ITS CUNNING."—Ps 137, v. 5.

### The Benefits of the Protestant Reformation.

#### A DISCOURSE

PREACHED BY THE REV. A. W. HERDMAN,

*In St. Andrew's Church, Pictou, on the 20th December, 1860, being the day of Tricentenary, and now published by desire.*

"The time of reformation."—HEB. IX. 10.

(Concluded.)

THE first blessing which I shall mention, is that of a *preached gospel*.

Before that period, there was disputation but not much preaching; the Reformation, however, restored that ordinance, and what a blessing has it proved! For one thing, it has been found to be the most effectual antidote against error. With Knox in the pulpit, Popery was refuted and the true doctrine established. Protestants for the last three hundred years have employed the pulpit as the engine for exposing and demolishing the strongholds of superstition and error, and under the blast of the trumpet have the walls of antichrist been shaken. And for another thing, the preaching of God's word has enlightened and converted more souls than has its perusal or its teaching. The very instruction communicated by means of the pulpit, is itself no small boon; and when to this is added a vigorous application of the truth to the conscience, then does preaching become effectual for good. How many dark souls has it lighted up for eternity, and careless hearts admonished! Its power is in no wise diminished by the lapse of years: just now it is

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heard in the streets of Naples, and becomes a weapon for liberty under the walls of China, and operates as an instrument of civilization in Japan. What had the South Sea Islands become without preaching, and in what condition had our own land been at this moment, had reformers been silent? Nor may preaching ever be despised, for it is heaven's appointed method for salvation. Still, as in the days of the apostles, by the foolishness of preaching, as the world accounts it, does God save them that believe. Hence must preaching, as restored by the Reformation, be ranked as a prime and important benefit derived from that event.

A second one was *the revival of literature*. Before the Reformation, the "dead languages" alone were attended to, and even these were entombed, but immediately afterwards a thirst for general knowledge revived. The original language of the New Testament was studied, and professors of Greek were appointed; while English literature began to occupy a name and place unknown. Milton and Shakespeare, Dryden and Cowley, are all the offspring of the Reformation,—not that these were all Protestants, or that there were no historians, poets, or philosophers before, but that event whetted, as it emancipated the human faculties, strengthened as it guided the intellect. Our literature had neither name nor memorial previously. The dark ages were as devoid of the gifts of learning as of virtue, and it is not too much to say that we had never seen telegraphs or railways, canals or steamboats, any more than historians, poets, or divines, had we been still in the obscurity of the middle ages, when they who