

THE MONTHLY RECORD,

OF THE

Church of Scotland

IN

NOVA SCOTIA, NEW BRUNSWICK AND ADJOINING PROVINCES.

VOLUME XXVII.

MAY, 1881.

NUMBER V.

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning."—Psalms 137,4-5.

The Work of Missions Essential to the life of the Church.

SERMON

BY REV. C. W. HODGE, D. D.

EPH. III, 6. That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his body in Christ by the gospel.

It may seem an unnecessary task to endeavour to shew that the work of missions is essential to the life of the church, that it is involved in the idea of its being, and in the history of its origin and that of the New Testament in its doctrine and its history sends forth the salvation of the world as the object of the gospel, and lays the responsibility for the accomplishment of that object upon the missionary agency of the Church. It is so true that it seems like a truism, and yet, like many things of primary importance, there is danger that it be left to take care of itself in the search after less obvious and practical interests.

The commission was given by our Saviour to his disciples to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Terms could not be

found wider or more inclusive. And the time they were to tarry was set at Pentecost, when they should be endued with power from on high. And yet we find, so far as we have an account of their work in the Book of Acts, which though not complete in detail, must be accurate in principle that they were content to remain in Jerusalem for fourteen years preaching to none but Jews only, and that the gospel was carried to the Gentiles, not by the apostles in the first instance, but by the church, and that the church herself had first to be scattered by persecutions among the nations before the spirit of the gospel burning in the hearts of believers, impelled them to preach wherever they went, and where there was preaching there were conversions, and where there was believers there was the church. Not till the gentile church at Antioch was founded, did Jerusalem send Barnabas to oversee it, and not until fourteen years after the ascension did the church at Antioch enter upon the first systematic and ecclesiastical effort to spread the gospel in the world, in equipping and sending forth Barnabas and Paul. And even yet, the original apostles took no direct part in thus carrying out the commission of the Saviour, but remained in Jerusalem, or were content, no doubt for wise reasons, to go to the Jews