

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

NARRATIVE

OF A WORK OF GRACE, IN PERTH, UPPER CANADA,
BY THE REV. THOMAS C. WILSON, MINISTER OF
ST. ANDREWS CHURCH.

In our last, we promised to give some extracts from this interesting document; and we have now much pleasure in furnishing the following: sincerely hoping that it may tend to remove the prejudice existing in the minds of many professing Christians against "Revivals of Religion." We most heartily adopt the language of a contemporary, on this subject:—"May the work spread and be perpetuated, until every church and every family obtain a time of refreshment and visitation that will long be remembered!"

"From the third week in November to the third in December, our meetings were kept up every alternate night; sometimes as many as sixty persons have come forward at once in an anxious state of mind, some of whom have been members of the church for years—the greater number, however, being persons under twenty or twenty-five years of age, and who had never been communicants. The usual exercises of every evening, from first to last, were the reading and exposition of the Scriptures, with exhortation, prayer, and praise. Since the third week in December, the practice of inviting persons to come forward has been discontinued, and, for the most part, our meetings have been held only on Sabbath and Wednesday evenings.

"During the early part of the week, I was assisted successively by the Rev. Messrs. McLaurin, Campbell, Fairbairn, and McAlister; for the greater part of the time, however, I have been alone—the elders and other pious members of the church taking a part in conducting the devotional exercises.

"In all our meetings the utmost order and solemnity have uniformly prevailed, and the reading and the exposition of the Scriptures has been accompanied with much power. Many persons from great distances attended night after night, hungering and thirsting for the bread and water of life; and, for a time, almost every thing else was, in a great measure, set aside by many, in order to attend upon the word and prayer.

"Although the heavenly shower seems at present to have in some measure ceased, its refreshing influences are still powerfully experienced by many—the Spirit is still at work, convincing here and there individuals who were not formerly affected. Those who, previous to the commencement of the work, had obtained a good hope through grace, have been greatly revived and strengthened; the doubts and darkness of many weak believers have been dispelled, formalists have been undeceived and humbled at the foot of the Cross, and numbers are now rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, who, before this gracious work began, were living without God, some of them being open enemies to the Cross of Christ, and glorying in their shame.

"From first to last about one hundred and thirty persons came forward, professing to be in a state of anxiety about their souls; ten of these the session considered it their duty to receive into communion with the Church at the administration of the Lord's Supper, on the second Sabbath of December; two have applied to be admitted at next communion in March; and about as many more were communicants before, most of whom have apparently received much good, and, if not actually converted at this time, have, at least, been more firmly established in the faith of the rest of those who came forward: none, so far as I know, have relapsed into the same state of unconcern in which they previously were. There were, it is true, some who came forward, whose minds were not at any time very deeply impressed, and who are probably as careless as before; but there are few, I believe, who were deeply convinced of sin, who are not, more or less, troubled regarding their souls. Eternity alone will reveal all that the Lord has been doing in the midst of us in this season of revival through which we have passed. It was particularly interesting to notice, during the progress of the work, the different ways in which individuals found peace, according to the particular views in which

Christ, as a Saviour, was by the Spirit presented to their minds, or the doctrines or promises of scripture upon which they first were enabled to rest. As a rock, a refuge, a sacrifice, an intercession, a way, the Saviour from time to time revealed himself to this person and the other, as all their salvation and all their desire. Many persons who attended the meetings with no intention of going forward, felt such an irresistible desire to do so, as to have afterwards declared, that no person on earth, they thought, could have kept them back, some of them feeling at the time as if they were drawn from their seats, and urged to go forward by some secret influence, which they could not withstand. Those who felt thus deeply, for the most part, found peace soon after going forward; some of them, even as soon as they had resolved in their minds to do so, some precious promise or doctrine of the word of God having been generally in such cases so powerfully presented to the mind, as to form a resting place or foundation, upon which a good hope through grace has been built.

"With regard to the people of God themselves, it may be truly said, that their understandings were opened that they might understand the Scriptures, many of them being made to feel as if they had scarcely ever known before what spiritual life was, or understood to what precious privileges they were entitled as the children of God. The assistance which I myself experienced in performing the various duties of this deeply interesting season, I shall never forget. Truly I may say, the Lord stood by me to strengthen me; and though frequently, during the continuance of the work, I was filled with an overwhelming sense of my own utter unworthiness to be employed in such a work, and with great fear lest it should be hindered by any thing sinful or unwise on my part, I often experienced much comfort and joy, and felt humbly confident that God himself would perfect what he had begun.

"As a specimen of the manner in which the minds of different individuals were affected, the following cases may be noticed. One person observed to me, that, during the meetings, he had acquired more knowledge of the Scriptures than from all the sermons he had heard during the former years of his life, although he had been accustomed, before coming to this country, to hear some of the best preachers in Scotland.

"Another, a female, a member of the church, at the commencement of the work, told me, that during the sermon at the first meeting referred to in this account, she experienced such an overpowering sense of the greatness of her sins as made her feel she was ready to sink into hell under the heavy load; and that, having gone forward when the invitation was given, her mind was very soon relieved of the intolerable burden, and she went home rejoicing in the Lord. Since then she seems to have experienced much of the love of Christ.

"Another female, not a communicant, who had been in great anxiety of mind for some days, having retired to bed one night still without hope, upon awakening during the night, found her mind in a state of peace and joy, and seems to be rapidly advancing in the divine life, looking earnestly to Christ as the way of salvation, and as very precious to her soul.

"A young man who now appears to be established in the truth, informed me that for a considerable time before the work commenced, his mind had been in an anxious state. He was tired, he said, of sin, but had not the fortitude to give up his loose companions or sinful practices. In this state of mind, he wished that something might happen, though he could not tell what, by which he might be enabled to take some decided step regarding his sinful course of life; and when the invitation was given to persons in an anxious state of mind to go forward publicly, he felt at once that this was what would just suit his case, as by going forward he would thereby publicly declare before all, his determination to turn from the evil of his ways. Even then, however, when he felt the importance of publicly avowing his determination in this way, he was tempted to keep back, by the idea that a resolution to forsake sin might be as strongly formed in secret in his own mind, as if it were openly avowed. At last, concluding that it would not be so, he summoned fortitude, and went forward; and though his mind has never been so much elevated in the experience of heavenly joy as some others have

been, there is every reason to hope that he is steadily advancing in the knowledge and love of divine things, and enjoys a degree of peace such as he never experienced before.

"I might fill many pages with a description of other cases similar to these, and which also have come under my own observation. These, however, may suffice as a specimen of the work, of which a striking characteristic throughout has been the quietness and solemnity with which it was carried on, and the comparative absence of opposition, or even evil speaking, on the part of that class of persons everywhere to be met with, who usually, on such occasions, are ready to give vent to the natural enmity which they feel to the truth. It often happened that persons who came to the meeting from mere curiosity, or even with a disposition to find fault, went away with the impression that God was surely in the midst of us, and that it was in reality His work which was going on.

"It may be proper to remark, that no extra means or efforts of any kind had been used to produce any excitement in the congregation. Before the work commenced, the usual routine of religious exercises was regularly attended to, such as the ordinary services of the Lord's day, the Bible Class, the Sabbath School, and the weekly prayer-meetings. There was no idea in the minds of any of having more frequent public meetings than formerly, till we found ourselves unexpectedly in the very midst, as it were, of a protracted meeting, and of a wonderful work of God; hundreds, night after night, in spite of the most inclement weather, and of roads in the very worst condition, flocking eagerly to the house of prayer. It is to be remarked, however, that individual members of the church, for some time back, had felt a stronger desire than usual for a revival of religion, and the conversion of souls, and were consequently praying more earnestly for an outpouring of the Spirit."

A PRESS of original matter has prevented us from earlier publishing the following interesting letter, which we have had in our possession for some weeks:—

LETTER FROM THE REV. GEORGE SCOTT, METHODIST MISSIONARY TO SWEDEN.

LIVERPOOL, Oct. 19, 1841.

To the Editors of the *New York Observer*:

The interest you manifested in the welfare of the Swedish Missionary, imposes on me the pleasing duty of sending a hurried line from this place, that my many kind friends may, through you, be informed of my safe arrival in Britain. In ordinary circumstances, such information would be considered superfluous; but as the voyage of the *Caledonia* has been unusually boisterous, and even dangerous, some little anxiety may have been felt for the safety of the ship, and those on board.

We left Boston on the 2d, at 2, P.M., with fine weather and a head wind, which the powerful steamer did not appear to feel in the least, and we all expected to land in Halifax in good time, on the morning of Monday the 4th. Little did we know, however, what awaited us. The breeze freshened during Saturday night, and on Sabbath it blew a heavy gale, which increased greatly until Monday morning, when it was perhaps at its height. On that day the sea was tremendous; and all that could be done was to place the ship in as easy a position as possible, and let her drive. One of our boats was swept into the ocean—the companion to the fore-castle, and the ice-house, with a portion of our fresh provisions, were carried off—and the foreyard, a spar 16 inches thick, was snapped through by a sea as if it had been a reed. The tiller chains broke, and for a time the ship was at the mercy of winds and waves, and, worse than all, nine of the crew were disabled in the storm. The third mate had his leg broke, the carpenter's was fractured in two places, and seven others were more or less injured. Our faithful and skilful captain declared that during the 35 years of his sea-faring life, he had never seen such a storm continue so long. He was out on the same coast in the gale in which it is supposed the *President* went down—and though he considers that more violent than the one recently passed through, it was comparatively of very short continuance. I could now understand clearly how such a vessel