

The Record.

MARCH, 1861.

COLLECTION IN AID OF WIDOWS' AND ORPHANS' FUND.

We beg to remind Ministers and Sessions that the collection in aid of the Widows' and Orphans' Fund, the last in order of the Synodical Collections, is appointed to be taken up on the third Sabbath of the current month. This object, although not directly connected with the extension of the Gospel, or the prosperity of religion, has still a most important bearing on the interests of the Church, and the welfare of Zion. Whatever tends to relieve the minds of the Pastors of the Church of anxiety and care, must be, in its results, beneficial to the Church, by imparting to the minds of Ministers, increased vigour and buoyancy, which cannot but tell on their labours, and render them more effective and fruitful. Our Widows' Fund scheme is calculated to free the minds of Ministers from many cares which might otherwise press upon them, and damp their energies; and for the reasons which we have hinted at already, it is both the duty and interest of the congregations to aid in keeping up this fund. We have reason to be thankful for the measure of success, which has attended this scheme, but it has not yet reached the point, which experienced actuaries and business men have considered desirable and safe. Besides it has now been resolved by the Synod, that, until there shall be a fund for aged and infirm Ministers, on an independent basis, one half of the collection for the Widows' Fund shall be set apart for the nucleus of such a fund. There is at present one Minister, who laboured for many years, but is now laid aside in a great measure from active duties. More may be expected to be in such a state. Hence there is an additional reason for contributing with a liberal hand to the collection now appointed, seeing that it has to fulfil a double purpose.

It is hoped that in all congregations an opportunity will be given to the people of contributing for this object on the day appointed, or as soon as may be found practicable.

STATE OF RELIGION.—REVIVAL MOVEMENTS.

We give below details of the progress of the revival in the various parts of the world. The details are gathered from the *British Messenger*, and other publications. The perusal of these will no doubt call forth gratitude and praise, for there is such a bond of

union among christians throughout the whole world, that if there is prosperity and revival anywhere, all are constrained to rejoice. The perusal of these details may stir up prayer and strengthen confidence in the power and faithfulness of Him with whom is the residue of the Spirit. What He is doing elsewhere, He can do here.

LONDON.—In London the world's concert for prayer found many prepared to enter on its sacred engagements. Many ministers of the Church of England, as well as others, made arrangements for holding meetings for christian communion, and presenting their common supplications at the throne of grace. The special meetings in theatres and other public places, still continue with the happiest results. Services have been conducted in seven different theatres. There have been special meetings also, not only in Exeter Hall, but in Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's Cathedral, and other places, which a short time ago were simply places to be looked at by visitors. It is calculated that last year, 170,000 persons, most of them non-church goers, and many of them gathered in from the most degraded masses, heard the Gospel in theatres. Messrs. Radcliff, Weaver, and others have been labouring principally in London, but making occasional evangelistic tours to different parts of the country.

SCOTLAND.—Colporteurs and others engaged in evangelistic labours, report a very great change on the subject of religion. Many are ready to talk about spiritual things and are ready too to hear. Family worship is kept up in many places where it was unknown before. In various parts of Berwickshire, there has been a work of revival, which is still progressing. At one farm fourteen persons, men and women, professed to have found peace in believing. In Orkney, the work has been of a very remarkable character. A minister who labours there, writes:—

"I cannot describe the work to you—apart altogether from my want of space and time, my pen cannot. I believe no pen could give you a full idea of it. But I shall endeavor to present to you what will be but a faint sketch. The church was filled in all its parts by the hour of meeting, five o'clock. The devotional exercises were begun and proceeded with for some time without interruption. These exercises consisted of praise and prayer, the latter conducted by two individuals who had been deeply impressed, and portions of Scripture were read between these services by myself and Mr. Armour. As these were proceeded with, I perceived symptoms of great excitement all around me. Some were trembling from head to foot; others rubbing and wringing their hands. Some were whispering in an agitated manner to their neighbors, and others starting as if about to rise, and then trying to settle themselves down again. A portion of Scripture

was about to be read, and introducing the subject, the name of Jesus was mentioned, when a young man who was deeply impressed, and who sitting before the pulpit, started up, and stretching out his arms and looking eagerly in the direction in which he pointed, cried out in ecstasy, "Jesus! Jesus! See him! See him! He is glorious in holiness! He is the chief among ten thousand! He is altogether lovely!"—and turning to the audience, he proceeded with great fluency and power to speak of Jesus's suitability as a Saviour for sinners. But his voice, although a stentorian one, was soon drowned by a tremendous outburst of feeling—piercing cries of agony—loud acclamations of joy—prayers uttered audibly, and with great earnestness; and persons rushing through the passages, and addressing friends and acquaintances on the great interests of their immortal souls. The whole proved a scene such as I never witnessed, and was to me perfectly overpowering. I think I can restrain my feelings as well as most people, but on this occasion I was completely overcome. I laid my face upon the desk and sobbed for awhile, and I am sure I was not singular. I felt powerfully the sentiment of the patriarch, "How dreadful is this place! Here is the great God working wondrously. He is present in almost visible manifestations, and I felt awe and fear as well as joy."

During the part of the evening that followed, the excitement continued unabated, and its leading features much the same as I have described—all were more or less impressed, but very differently. Some were on their knees praying, and others lying on their faces groaning in agony. Some running about apparently wild with joy, and others in groups singing hymns and psalms of praise. The session-house had been set apart for those who wished to retire, but to be there was no great retirement, for it was crowded during the evening with praying people, and so were the pews of the church, and the back seats of the gallery, and many were found prostrate on the floor of the church, between the seats and in out-of-the-way corners, in great mental agony: and I have seen two or three girls, apparently about eight or ten years of age, kneeling on the floor with their faces on the seat-board, and one of their number, about the same age, praying most earnestly over them and for them; and there were many such instances of juvenile earnestness. As many had left the Free Church during the meeting of the previous evening, for the purpose of being more completely alone than they could be in any part of the church, I was anxious to know if anything of the kind was occurring this evening, and on going out and looking about me, I found many about the church and dyke-sides, some of them standing, but many kneeling on the cold wet ground, praying earnestly, the most of them audibly, some with a suppressed voice, and others so loudly as to be easily heard at a distance. In the corner of the back garden, there issued forth a girl's voice evidently, greatly suppressed at first, but gradually waxing louder, and she was bewailing the sins and short-comings of herself and her companions, some of whom were likely with her, from the way in which she spoke:—"O Lord, how thoughtless and sinful we have been, in neglecting and misimproving our precious privileges! I'll speak for myself without reserve, and I ac-