

# THE GUARDIAN.

"HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD."

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## POETRY.

### PRAYER.

BY THE REV. J. A. WALLACE, MINISTER OF HAWICK.

There is an eye that never sleeps  
Beneath the wing of night;  
There is an ear that never shuts  
When darkness shrouds the light.

There is an arm that never tires  
When human strength gives away;  
There is a love that never fails  
When earthly loves decay.

That eye is fix'd on seraph throngs,—  
That ear is fill'd with angel's songs,—  
That arm upholds the worlds on high,—  
That love is thron'd beyond the sky.

But there's a power which man can wield  
When mortal aid is vain,  
That eye, that arm, that love to reach,  
That listening ear to gain.

That power is prayer—stupendous boon!  
To sinful beings giv'n,  
It moves the Mind omnipotent,  
That rules o'er earth and heav'n.

## LITERATURE.

### THE RECENT REVIVAL OF RELIGION AT KILSYTH.

In the past history of our church, it is matter of devout thankfulness that there have been occasional manifestations of a spirit of awakening, and a revival of vital godliness. Such precious seasons ought to be diligently improved in the parishes where they occur. The heart of many a Christian amongst us has of late been refreshed by the joyful tidings of the revivals which have begun to appear in different parts of the country, and it is gratifying to have in our power to give a short, but deeply interesting account, of one of these recent awakenings, as given in the language of the faithful and highly honoured pastor of Kilsyth, Mr. Burns. At a late meeting of the Presbytery of Glasgow, he thus describes to his brethren the glorious work, which, under the rich pouring of the Spirit, has been going forward in Kilsyth.

When I entered on the charge of the parish of Kilsyth, about eighteen years ago, it appeared to me a beautiful valley, like that of Sodom; resembling it, indeed, too closely, for intemperance, lewdness, neglect of the Lord's day, and other evils, were exceedingly prevalent among the people. Many Lots indeed there were exhibiting genuine piety; but when I considered that the advantages and the privileges possessed were much greater than those of the people of Sodom, I could not help the reflection, that a greater number of pious families would be required to save the place than was necessary in the case of Sodom. Even those who were pious, devout people seemed to be obtuse and blinded to the existing evils. When I went among them I commenced early to visit the parish, and to go through every family; and this I have been enabled, under the goodness of Providence, having a robust and healthy constitution, to continue annually up to the present time, excepting a part of the country parish, that could not be overtaken every successive year. I also commenced classes for the young; and from these operations I can now trace great practical benefits to have been derived. From the latter of these (my classes) very great advantage has been drawn; for some of those who are now my elders belonged to them in their youth. In 1829 there were many affecting proofs of depravity and immorality exhibited in the parish, which called for more than ordinary exertions on our part. We at that time resolved on setting apart a day of humiliation and fasting; and reasons for adopting this step were set before the people of the parish. This course was attended by an evident blessing from on high; and I marked afterwards that solemn impressions had then been made on the minds of many which have never left them to this day. In 1832, the country was visited with cholera; the neighbouring parish of Kirkintilloch, as you know, was deeply affected with that visitation, and the impression on the minds of our people was, that whatever might be its cause,—whether it came from the east or the west,—whether it was the result of moral, natural, or

physical causes, we would have a visit of the scourge. In consequence of this, our prayer meetings were crowded, and many consultations were held about spiritual matters; but, I must say, much more about prevention from disease. The panic passed away, and our prayer-meetings got thinner; but we nevertheless continued them as before.—In March 1836, a meeting was held on the evening of the Monday after the communion, the object of which was to improve the dispensation of the ordinances, to pray for the divine blessing on the services, and for the revival of godliness among us. A deep impression was made on the auditory, and prayer-meetings increased in the parish till they amounted to the number of thirty. At that period some were converted. One individual told me that the means of his conversion were very simple: the morning prayer on the Sabbath, he said was more close and searching than usual. One part of it was for those people who had come to church without prayer; and the passage immediately struck him, "Thou art the man." He was deeply impressed, as were also many others, and they set about calling on their neighbours to go to the prayer meetings. On these occasions it was usual to call on young parents, more especially those who did not pray in their families. These attended for some weeks before they were called on to pray, so that they might be instructed how to do so, and have their minds impressed by the practice. At this period prayer-meetings were held in many parts of the town on the mornings of the Sabbath, to pray for a blessing on the services of the day. In 1837 these good practices were rendered more efficient still by the labours of a missionary, who wrought among the people with great zeal, a new church was erected, and many additional prayer-meetings instituted, and gradually, from eighty or ninety, the numbers assembling in that church, on the Lord's day, amounted to three hundred; and since the present movement began there has been a great accession to the numbers, and now they are making application for the appointment of a minister. In the month of July last more than usual solemnity characterised the meetings on the fast day, and Friday evening, when there was a sermon by my son. The solemnity that was observable on these occasions led me to adopt a course I had not followed before, and in the evening I had a meeting, to confer with those who wished to receive instructions, and to give advice. On the Monday the attendance was good, and the services interesting and solemn; and in the evening there was held a half-annual meeting of a missionary society. A sermon from the first verse of the fifty-second of Isaiah, "Awake, awake; put on thy strength O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the Holy City," was preached by my brother from Paisley. It was then intimated, that as my son was about to leave us on a foreign mission, and perhaps would never have an opportunity of speaking to the people of Kilsyth again, he would preach to them in the open air. The circumstance of his being a young man, brought up among them, and the interesting circumstances, too, in which he was placed, as about to leave his native country,—all these had the effect of bringing out a very unusual attendance. The day was unfavourable for having the services in the open air, and they were proceeding with in the church, which was crowded to overflowing by the people, many of whom had never been seen in any church before, and who had remained away on the excuse that they had not the requisite dress. After praise and prayer, a portion of the second chapter of Acts was read. The impression produced by reading that portion of God's Word was unusual, and the feelings of the people were evidently deeply interested; and this solely by the reading of it, with perhaps a remark or two in passing, by way of explanation. The sermon was from the text, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." There was nothing unusual in the first half hour, though there was a tendency and a predisposition to the burst of emotion which took place at the close. When the preacher was depicting the scene in the parish of Shotts, and when he was dwelling on that topic, and making affectionate and earnest addresses to the people, many of them known to him from his boyhood, and some of them known to be neglectful of ordinances,—circumstances which gave a degree of affection and pathos to his address,—when he was referring to this topic, he spoke of the text and the sermon of Mr. Livingstone, which converted in one day five hundred souls; and he went on affectionately to ask

if he was to leave them in their sins, using the words, "If there was no cross there would be no crown." When he came to this point the audience went beyond all bounds with their emotion,—some cried out, and others swooned away. With regard to three or four of them, as was learned afterwards, the emotion was just the effect of a powerful impression made upon their feelings; for the results, as seen in the future, were the only things, as all might be aware, on which we could rely. The preacher's voice was drowned by the feelings of his auditory, and he was compelled to pause. A Psalm was then sung, and my brother delivered an address, warning them that mere feeling was not to be relied upon, without the influence of the Spirit. The meeting broke up, but met again in the evening; my son deeming it his duty to remain, and to send another person to supply his place in Dundee. After this, meetings were held every night; many people came to the manse, and we had a good deal to do. Those who came were chiefly young persons; but still persons of all ages waited upon us for advice. On Thursday evening a meeting was held in the open air, and many individuals, not present before, were brought by the report of what had occurred. At this and future meetings sound impressions were made on every occasion we met. We heard of many cases, and I saw personally the power of the Gospel on many. At a meeting in the open air, held on Thursday, in the market-place three thousand or four thousand people attended, and a deep impression was made on that occasion, though not so strong as on the first day,—but the emotion felt was considerably beyond what is usual. After the meetings, we adjourned to converse, chiefly with young people; and these were the most remarkable features of the case. On the Lord's day, when we met in the churchyard, the conversation continued from three o'clock till eight; and we then found it almost impossible to withdraw. There were in attendance from three thousand to four thousand persons; and about one thousand returned, desiring us to continue our conversation, that they might hear more and more of the Gospel. Our strength became exhausted, and we intimated to those whose feelings would not allow them to wait till another day, that there were elders and others who were ready to attend to their wishes; and I stated that I would meet them at seven o'clock next morning. At seven o'clock on Monday, there were about three hundred present, many of them under deep concern about their souls. Mr. Sommerville came out on Monday from Glasgow, and preached that evening in the open air to about four thousand people. At the conclusion of his sermon there was a desire to go to the church, which was quite filled. There was the greatest composure and deep interest exhibited in every thing that was said. In short, from the 23d July, up to the present hour, we have found it the path of duty to occupy the present scene, and to improve what we may call a spring time. We acknowledge that there are difficulties connected with a work of this nature; and I have sometimes been reminded of that passage in the life of our Saviour, where we are told that the apostles threw their net to the wrong side of the ship and found nothing, but that on the other side of the ship they found a multitude of fishes, so great that the net broke. The breaking of the net, Sir, is not pleasant; but though the labour put before us was great, we found it our duty to sow the good seed. I have been assisted greatly by my brethren coming forward, and occupying the field of labour; and I may say, for their comfort, that every sermon that has been delivered has affected this and the other individual, before careless and ungodly, or whose conduct was characterised by apathy and formality, and led to a concern about their souls. The last thing I heard was, that two individuals, who resisted all opportunities of hearing the Gospel, and mocked at it, and who were accustomed to use such language as this, in relation to the preacher, "Who is to be the actor and performer this evening?" these individuals have been brought under the Gospel. One of them I some time ago charged with the reading of infidel books; he denied it then; but after his change he brought the books and burned them all before the whole people. One individual, a chartist, and a violent kind of man, from Kirkintilloch, was also affected, and he went home to tell his mother the change that had come over him. Another individual was, some time ago, accosted by me for holding infidel principles, and reading their books, when I told him that I kept a list of all my parishioners who held these sentiments. At that time he abjured his opini-