

## SOCIAL WORSHIP.

It is a remarkable fact that revivals of religion have, in every age, been carried forward mainly by what may be termed the social means of grace. In Ezra's time we find the people assembled by thousands and tens of thousands to hear the Scriptures read and expounded, not by a few favourite preachers, but by a multitude—almost all who could read and explain were engaged in making known the Word to their companions—and the result was deep conviction, repentance, reformation, and consecration to God.

So also in the days of the apostles. From the season of Pentecost, when three thousand were converted in a day, all through the planting and growth of the primitive churches, we find all Christians uniting actively and heartily in the work. True, the apostles laboured and preached mightily, but private Christians laboured conjointly with them, and altogether shared in the service and reward. It was the same in the great revivals under Luther, Wesley, Edwards.

The great revivals in Sweden a year or two since, commenced and progressed very simply, chiefly in social meetings for reading the Bible. In a recent gracious refreshing enjoyed in Ireland, social exercises were the great instrumentality. The recent revivals in America, especially in the cities, have been almost wholly by social means.

Shall we not profit by such experience and observation? Able ministers and great sermons can never accomplish the work; the church must arise. Not that preachers should do less, but private Christians more. Now, as ever, it is true, that "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are;" to manifest that the excellency of the power is of God and not of us.

Cherish, then, simple means. Encourage little gatherings for prayer and conversation. They ought to be held frequently in every neighbourhood in the country, in every street in the city. God will surely

bless, if we only rely on Him in the use of suitable means.—*British Messenger*

## PERFECT IN CHRIST JESUS.

God sets aside the sinner, brings in the Son of his love; works out a perfect righteousness, and that righteousness, which is the righteousness of God, is imputed to the believer.

It was a glorious statement of Martin Luther, to which he gave expression in one of his mighty orations, upon the sinner's justification not by works, but by Christ. Noble, lion-hearted reformer! How one loves to hear him! Said Luther to the listening and wondering Christendom, just awaking from the sleep of superstition—*"As Christ is before God, so am I."* Of course, our reformer excepted His essential glory, which is incommunicable, and which none can share.

A similar utterance was made by the great Irish evangelist of the sixth century, St. Patrick was evidently struggling for the great truth we are considering. Said he—*"The sinner nothing; Christ everything. Christ before me: Christ behind me: Christ on the right hand: Christ on the left hand: Christ below me as a rock: Christ above me."* And, as if he struggled to get utterly rid of self—*"Christ in me, Christ through me."* Could love be more perfect that puts the first Adam, the natural man, aside and makes the believer before God all that Jesus is,—as I have said, his Deity excepted? It is thus that God does not view the sinner, who is dead, crucified in Christ, *as he is in himself*, but He sees him *in Christ*, in whom is redemption, righteousness, light, life and holiness—*"The Lord our Righteousness."* Oh, may God give you to understand this!

Oh that we may know this perfect love of God, that puts a perishing, hell-deserving sinner in Christ, in righteousness, in holiness, in perfectness, so that such an one as Paul could say, *"I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;"* and, *"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* Oh, how near this brings me to my God and Father!

"So near, so very near to God,  
Nearer I cannot be;  
For in the person of His Son,  
I am as near as He."

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