

THOUGHTS ON REVIVAL.

God's cause on earth is the most important interest in the universe, not only because of its intrinsic greatness and glory, but also because of the influence which, through it, He exerts on creation, as indicated in the statement that unto the principalities and powers among the heavenly is made known, by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God. Here God has given the grandest revelation of himself which the universe ever possessed, and here the volume which contains it is unfolded as ages roll on.

The great end, in its aspect towards man, which God seeks by it, is to plant and educate the life of God in the soul, awakening within it a longing, and preparing it for full communion with himself. In order to appreciate His work, and how it fares to-day in our world, we must consider that men have lost all regard for Him, and become so unconscious of their mishap, that it is not uncommon for some who assume to lead in religious matters, to speak as if the benefit of humanity were the sum and end of all real religion. Humanity indeed benefits by it, but its good no more constitutes the end of religion, than pleasure constitutes the end of eating. The grand end of true religion is, to exalt God to that place in our affections of which sin deprived Him, and in doing so, to make Him the admired of the universe, and eternally prevent any further spread of that sad tendency to assail His dominion and glory, of which we have had such a miserable experience. God has, in our day, put His cause on a vantage ground, such as it had not in any previous period. Compared with the state of matters in the past age, the advantage is utterly incalculable. Its cold, cynical philosophy has almost died out. Men are awake to the fact that a cold, formal acceptance of truth is not goodness, and that our emotional qualities and sympathies need to be quickened and raised to a loftier exercise. Even a blind craving after this is a gain, and blind to a large extent it is, for multitudes, both Papist and Protestant, mistaking the proper object towards which the inner life of the soul should be directed, seek, as has been said, merely the good of man; and ignorant of the efficacy of gospel doctrine, when wielded by the Holy Ghost, aim at awakening and arousing it to activity, by various modes of appealing to the sensuous department of our nature. These overlook the fact, that God does not seek, and will not accept from us unintelligent—but rational emotion—emotion arising from a proper appreciation of His character as revealed in His word. They fear doctrines, as having a withering effect. Perhaps they see that the children of our Church are apt, in times of coldness, to satisfy themselves with having a correct creed; and being themselves more emotional than intellectual, they easily blame the adherence to doctrine, as short-lived, the source of the evil, which they find associated with it, and a hindrance to the cause of truth. This cry indicates a lack of real religious intelligence, and is apt to make thoughtful men suspect, or at least to make them very cautious before sanctioning any movement which such parties commend. What good thing has not been abused? We read of some who used the favor of God to excuse (if not to promote) lasciviousness. When men rest on their knowledge of doctrines for salvation, they are using them for their own ruin; then indeed the spirit killeth; and yet it is only through doctrines that we can know God, whom to know is life eternal, so that it is through them that the spirit giveth life. The doctrines of God's word cannot be held too sacredly, or preached too fully, and any move-