

REVIVALS OF RELIGION AND OF LIBERALITY.

It is an exceedingly difficult matter to tell what is the precise relation which these two things bear the one to the other. There have been cases of supposed revival, and these of an extensive kind, that have brought no increase of tithes into the Lord's treasury; while others have opened a perennial spring of liberality in the congregations visited by them. And yet it would not be right to say that in the first case there was no true revival, or work of the Holy Spirit. It might be that the people's attention was not directed towards the channel of liberality, or that they were previously taxed up to their full power; or that God's grace, working effectively, yet slowly, took a long time to affect the pockets of men long accustomed to extreme parsimony in matters pertaining to religion. The Baptist minister was in the right, who told his convert to take his purse down with him, and give it a share in the baptism. The Jews had divers baptisms, not dippings however, of household furniture and utensils, tables and beds, pots and cups, and brazen vessels, and thus consecrated and re-consecrated these to God. Those who in Apostolic times gave themselves to the Lord, gave all their household, and all that they possessed; considering this nothing more than a proper acknowledgment of their allegiance, and their Master's claim. In the present day it does not follow, because one gives himself or herself to Christ, and to the Church for His sake, that all, that such an one has and is, thereby becomes Christ's. And yet it ought to be so. We would not be disposed to find fault with any earnest outspoken man that might call in question the christianity of a convert, who places himself in the Church, and leaves his purse in the world. The purse should follow its owner. If it does not, the owner's heart will follow it. Baptize the purse by all means, if you would be in any true sense a consecrated man.

There are some Churches that have not been visited with a revival of religion, although anxious desires are expressed in them that such a work of grace might appear. It does not come; and oftentimes the reason is that the members of such churches have neglected to make use of a means recommended and commanded for the end desired. In Malachi's day the command came: "Ye have robbed me," says God, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." There are not many who take this means of bringing about a revival. It savors too much, they say, of the doctrine of works; as if one could err in following a plain Scripture command. We hear of attempts to get up revivals in certain places, but never have we heard of attempts to bring about the desired result in accordance with the recommendation that came by the prophet Malachi. It is the Christian people of congregations that are most often to blame for the absence of revival. Their want of devotedness, as seen in the vast disproportion between their expenditure in time and means, for the Church and for the world, is not only a stumbling block to their fellow-worshippers not in the membership, but a positive cause of God's withholding the promised blessing.

The Christian often asks for an evidence of his gracious state. Liberality may not be a sure positive evidence, but the want of it is a pretty sure negative one. He, who knows not whether he is dreaming or awake, pinches himself, and by the pain inflicted comes to assurance. Let Christians pinch themselves, make a larger call than usual upon their means for the cause of