

enjoyed, and the means by which it is to be secured and promoted. These are so intimately connected, and run so much into each other, that it will probably be best to consider them together. We shall also be under the necessity of being exceedingly brief upon this part of our subject, having room only to indicate great general principles.

Two things are especially necessary, in order to a revival of religion in any Christian church, or in the church generally. First, that Christians be prepared for it. Second, that God in heaven exert an influence to produce it.

It depends upon God and the church, but depends upon them in different senses; upon God as, the fountain of influence,—upon the church as the recipient of that influence.

An influence may be exerted, but the church may not be in a state of suitable preparation to receive it; nay, more, may repel the means of a revival. If this is not the case, we do not understand the meaning of the following injunctions:—"Grieve not the Holy Spirit;" "Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings."

The Spirit is beautifully and appropriately compared to a dove. And how often does that celestial dove hover above a Christian church, looking, as it were, for a spot upon which to rest; but finding none, takes his departure for heaven!

"He flies from scenes of noise and strife."

Preparation, then, on the part of the church, is necessary to a revival of religion. There must be a perception of her melancholy condition, induced by the preaching of the gospel, the perusal of the Scriptures, the dispensations of divine Providence, or other means of grace. The church must avail herself of such means as God has put within her power, for

ascertaining and feeling her state of declension and ingratitude. Her guilt must be acknowledged, penitence must be felt, and humility cherished before God. Solemn prayer must be offered, and a new dedication to God made. There must be willingness to do the will of God; a meeting God, so to speak, not in pride, not in self-sufficiency, not in jealousy and distrust, but in meekness, fear, and faith. This must be done, just as a child, returning to the home from which he had wandered, meets his mother; as the exile, coming back to the land of his birth, meets the friends of his early days,—of his happiest years.

Above all, there must be special influence from heaven. This is required, in consequence of the deceitfulness of the human heart, and the fearful power of outward temptation. It is promised in answer to prayer; it is given with the greatest possible freeness; and it is given just in that precise measure and mode which our exigencies require.

God and the church always go together in this interesting and delightful work. God is the giver, and the church the humble and grateful recipient. Hence, while the church is active, most active, in the promotion of revival, all the glory of it redounds to God.

As to the metaphysics of this relation, we cannot at present touch them. Perhaps the subject is somewhat beyond our grasp. It is well, at all times, to keep ourselves within the province of ascertained fact, and leave modes and relations, which in many cases are too high for us, just where we find them. It is, however, perfectly certain, that God is both able and willing to revive his work in any heart or in any church; and all that remains for us to do is, to lay open that heart and present that church to the sacred, the sanctifying influence of his Holy Spirit.