

repeating a truism. So apparent is its importance to every one who knows any thing of gospel promises, privileges, and appliances, that it seems needless to make such an affirmation. Who that believes the promises "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,"—"If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father, which is in Heaven;"—Who that has read the history of the primitive Church as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and traced the connection between united persevering prayer, and the wonderful revivals of Pentecost and succeeding days—who that knows anything of modern revivals and the means which God has blessed for their production, need be told that the prayer meeting as an agency for advancing the cause of Christ, has a value and power passing computation. When in addition to all this we endeavor to realize what the prayer meeting may become as a means for developing and stimulating the spiritual life of a Christian people, we will feel that it possesses a preciousness which very few appreciate. The prayer meeting therefore should be very dear to God's people. It should engage the warmest sympathies and the most earnest and sanctified efforts of all who would advance the Kingdom of God in their own souls or in the world around.

III.—HOW CAN WE MAKE THE PRAYER MEETING WHAT IT OUGHT TO BE.

I have already to some extent answered this question under the preceding head; but let us give it a little more consideration. To elevate the prayer meeting to anything like a desirable standard is not easy. There are many difficulties in the way of making any improvement. The *low state of religion* is the great barrier in the way, and a most discouraging fact. But that only makes it the more obligatory and necessary to try the more unceasingly and earnestly. In order to have the prayer meetings all that we would desire, it is necessary that the spirit of the people in general be changed. If all hearts are warm, the prayer meeting will soon get warmed up.

It may be true that we have not the material in abundance with which to make a lively, influential prayer meeting. But have we not some with which to make a commencement? Are there not two or three at least who desire a better state—who mourn over the religious coldness and desolation? Well, let those who feel this acknowledge it to one another, and thus awaken a feeling of sympathy, and open up a subject of common interest. And if they commence to talk to others, they will perhaps find more with the same feelings, or they may awaken others to similar desires. Let them throw away all diffidence, reserve, and false delicacy about these matters, and revive the old practice of talking to one another about religion. Let them draw more closely together, and fan each others' embers of zeal and desire into a flame. Just as in kindling a fire we draw together the coals and blow upon them until they blaze, and gather around them the driest materials we can get, so let us draw together the few live Christians we have, and stimulate and encourage one another and then draw others in as we can. Perhaps a special conference of all who take any part in the prayer meeting might be beneficial. It might awaken a greater interest, and direct more earnest attention to the nature and design of prayer meetings and what is needed to give them life and interest and efficacy. It might quicken effort and bring out views as to the method of conducting and managing the prayer meetings, and each one might be engaged to feel a personal interest, and try to make it what it ought to be. For this should be understood and acted upon, that it is not so much the minister's meeting as the people's, and that they are chiefly responsible for its interest and efficacy, and that every one has a part to perform, that every one should bring his quota, and that he should not refuse to perform that part because he feels that he can do it only imperfectly, nor withhold his quota because it is small. So let him not despise the day of small things for he knows not to what a greatness it may grow. By the exercise of his gifts they will grow to his own comfort and to