

who will doubt it?—then all minds, and hearts, and voices should unite in that appeal to God, “Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?” It is because of the low state of the Church in vital godliness that there is not a deeper, more solemn, and more heart-affecting sense of this need. Were the churches of Christ in a vigorous and healthful state there would be one pervading conviction of the urgent want of a reviving power of God the Holy Spirit.

*Turn now to the real state of the Church.*—It is perfectly true that a paralysing worldliness is moving side by side in our churches with Christian activity. This is seen in the eagerness after wealth and the unscrupulous means of obtaining it; in the growing taste among professors of religion for fashionable amusements both at home and abroad; in the propensity for show, extravagance, and gentility; in their luxurious and self-indulgent habits; in the homage paid to talent, and diminished estimate of solid and holy excellence; in the low state of prayer. Is it not a general confession and complaint, that prayer is sadly low, as demonstrated by the bad attendance at our prayer-meetings, and the cold, stiff, formal prayers which are presented there, too frequently little else than a round of set phrases and stereotyped forms of expression? Does the religion of a great part of the members of our churches appear like a reality? Do they bear the stamp of the Saviour’s image, of heaven’s bliss, of eternity’s dread solemnity? Are they a people that have come out and separated themselves from an ungodly world? Does their light *shine* before men, or is it scarcely visible? Do men take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus, by seeing in them so much of His spirit? Are they *fully* and *wholly* consecrated to His service, so that, like the Apostle, for them “to live is Christ?” Alas, alas! it is almost useless to ask these questions. Is not the negative palpable to be denied? If so, the churches notwithstanding their activity in supporting religious societies, their public spirit, their liberality, need reviving. We must not estimate the *spiritual* condition of the churches by the funds of our various institutions, and say, “Look at these and judge if there is not life amongst us.” In reply I say, if there *were*, indeed, true spiritual life in full vigour, there would be ten times the amount of what there is. Full spiritual vitality, if it did not repeat the scenes of the primitive Church, when no man called aught he possessed his own, but shared it with his brethren, would bring up the Macedonian benevolence which abounded amidst deep poverty in a cheerful and almost excessive liberality. Can any one who really understands the New Testament standard of piety say that our churches are in a state to satisfy us? Are they possessed of such resplendent piety as shall attract the attention, excite the admiration, conciliate the esteem of the world around them? Are they clothed with such power, instinct with such life, as shall fit them to be God’s instruments in bringing back a revolted world to Him? A dispensation is come upon them, but are they ready for it? Be it so they are not worse than at other times, ought they not to be much better? Did not their advantages, their opportunities, their responsibilities, *require* them to be better? The churches need revival, then, not only as regards themselves, but as regards the great work they have to do for God and the world. The conversion of the world is the Church’s commission, and it is a work to be done, not in its feebleness, but in its power.

*But what is a revival of religion?*—I approach this subject with intense anxiety to make it plain. It is not, then, a talk about the matter; a bustling activity in pursuing certain measures, either original or imitations; a setting up of protracted meetings; a series of wild, extravagant excitements to raise the affections and emotions to fever heat, if not to boiling point. It is something more sober, solemn, and silent than this; something more deep and sound, and more *truly* religious. I do not know that I can set this in a clearer light than by quoting an expression of the Apostle Paul. In writing to the Roman Church he says, “And I am sure that when I come unto you I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ.”—Rom. xv. 39. This, is a revival of religion; not only the *blessing*, but the *fulness* of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ, poured out by the Holy Spirit upon a church or country. Attend to that word,—the *FULNESS*. We may have, most of us *have* in fact, the blessing, but how few of us have the *fulness*,—i. e., the blessing in great abundance! Here a question arises. In