

In proceeding to do this, we cannot be charged by any member of the Committee on Statistics with acting prematurely, for the reason already stated, that it must be assumed that the Report as now published is complete, as sufficient time has elapsed between the meeting of Assembly and its issuing from the press to correct any errors, and remove any defects, which we remember the Convener stated when he presented the Report, were contained in it, and which the Committee could not avoid because of the lateness of some of the returns coming to hand. When we speak of the Report being complete, we do not mean that it shall be found free from errors, typographical and other, for all who have any knowledge of the difficulty of preparing reports involving so many figures and calculations will cheerfully admit that even an ordinary amount of care will not secure perfect accuracy; that one or even two readings and revisions of the *proofs* are not sufficient; that a most carefully sustained attention and a vigilant eye are requisite to detect a wrong or misplaced figure.

The importance of statistics cannot be too highly estimated. It is felt in the concerns of civil government, and it must be acknowledged in those of the Church. There are, it is true, matters of more vital moment than those which figures directly show—than the eye of man can observe or his hand record, such as the beginning, the progress, and the maturity of spiritual life, and, through these, the preparation of the soul for passing from the kingdom of grace to that of glory. But the prosperity of the Church shows itself in the ingathering of sinners, under the care of the Good Shepherd; in the assembling of her people for religious worship, whether on the Sabbath or the week-day; in the efforts she is making for the religious instruction of the young; and in the gifts poured into her treasury for the religious and benevolent objects which are to occupy her energies. Holiness of heart finds its expression, among other ways, in holiness of life. The more fully a saint is transformed into the image of God, the more manifestly will he adorn the doctrine of his Saviour in all things. In proportion to the strength with which God is shining into his heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of himself in the face of Christ Jesus, will be the clearness and intensity with which he will let his light shine. The internal has its outcome in the external. Faith will have its work, and Love its labour. Faith and Love are cardinal graces in every follower of the Lord. Then fruit and labour can and will be seen. They may and can be recorded; and in the collecting of such information as is contemplated by statistical returns, we have one of the forms in which the product, or part of the product, of these graces is ascertained, and published for the instruction of others. They let us see whether, and to what extent, the members and adherents of the Church are increasing; ministers are fulfilling their duty; the gospel is supported in our own land; the liberality of its professors drawn out for the supply of the spiritually destitute, both within our own Dominion and the remoter regions of idolatry; with other points of a similar character. And the Church has always shown an interest in such information; and we may add, that at our congregational missionary meetings, and even in the meetings of our Supreme Court, there is no part of the proceedings to which more attention is paid than those which communicate statistical information; and we are persuaded that if it were more frequently and abundantly supplied from the pulpit, the contributions of our people for religious purposes would be considerably increased.