

Denominational zeal among the members may operate in the same way, and with similar results. A feeling of satisfaction is always experienced when statistics show that the denomination to which one belongs, and to which he devotes his energies, is in the ascendancy or on the increase. So far as this is delight in the victory of truth over error, it is certainly commendable. But it may spring from a mere spirit of rivalry, ambition for the triumph of the party. Efforts to secure persons of doubtful piety lest they should be induced to unite with some other denomination, are not likely to produce permanent good. To lower the standard of admission for the sake of numbers, is a gain which will turn out in the end to be a loss, a temporary triumph, which will prove to be a defeat. 'Tis the fatal mistake, so often made, when quality is sacrificed for the sake of quantity.

Financial considerations may sometimes operate in the same direction, especially when churches are small, or some of the members become indifferent or disaffected, the responsibilities of supporting the cause frequently fall heavily on certain prominent members, and it is not, by any means, a matter of surprise that the burden is felt to be onerous, and that any hope of assistance should be welcomed. Additions to the membership are expected ultimately to add to the financial resources, and thus increase the means of usefulness in all directions. Hence a tendency in some cases, perhaps to increase the numbers as rapidly as possible. But the greatest danger of injudicious haste in this matter arises from a very different source. Nothing is more natural or common than for persons, very readily to believe that to be true, which they greatly desire to be so. Small arguments convince when "the wish is father to the thought." What do christian people so much desire as the conversion of the ungodly? And when ungodly men declare themselves regenerate, what is more natural than to believe it to be true? To question their motive, to seem to doubt or distrust their profession appears unkind, uncharitable, if not entirely unchristian. The strong desire that the profession may prove to be genuine, united with a broad christian charity that hopeth and believeth all things, may overpower the judgment and close the eyes and ears against great defects in the evidence, so that the church may, with open arms, receive to her bosom persons, of whom the outside world, looking from a different standpoint, has formed a very unfavorable opinion. It might, however, be thought quite unnecessary to guard the church against possibilities and dangers not likely to occur, since unconverted persons will not be inclined to wish or seek the fellowship of a christian church. While this, in ordinary cases, is readily conceded; there are many exceptional cases. In seasons of special religious excitement a whole community may become so aroused that the usual precautions are, for the time, forgotten. The young and inexperienced are borne along with the strong current of popular feeling, and may mistake mere sympathy with the common enthusiasm of the occasion for genuine conversion. And who can be ignorant of the fact that there is in every community a host to be found, who are always ready to fall in with, and aid whatever may be for the time the triumphant party; either to shout, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," or "Crucify him." They think they are sincere, but are, in fact, only following the impulse of the hour.

Many other inducements to a hasty admission might be referred to, but it will be in point here, for a moment, to enquire whether facts will warrant the conclusion that the danger has, in reality, been to any considerable extent realized? Do the lives of all our church members agree with the standard