

I suppose it will be generally admitted, that its state in any community, and at any period, is determined by such considerations as these:—the degree in which the minds of men are possessed by a sense of God's presence and of God's claims, and in which their lives are controlled by a regard to God's requirement of faith in Jesus Christ, and obedience to His will; the degree in which men are alive to the depravity and helplessness of their fallen state, and in which the provisions of the Gospel, the love of God in Christ, the atonement and intercession of the Saviour, the work of the Holy Spirit, are trusted and used as the only and all-sufficient remedy for this depravity and helplessness; the measure in which "the things which are above," the things which are unseen and eternal, are felt to be real, and to be commanding, in which the affections are actually set upon them; the measure in which goodness is valued above rank or riches, the approval of God above the favor of man; the measure in which there is real love to Christ and tender solicitude for those interests which are sacred in His eye; or, to add one other token, the degree in which those who belong to the church of Christ are walking "in the fear of God and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost."

Taking such considerations as these as tests, to what conclusion shall we come in regard to the religious life of the period, and within the limits of the Synod? That it is healthful and vigorous, or that it is weak and languishing? We shrink from at once definitely characterizing it as either the one or the other.

There are several aspects in which it is possible to contemplate and speak of the state of religion among us, only with satisfaction and with thankfulness to God. First. There is much outward respect paid to religion among persons of all classes, and if less, still also much that is more than outward, that beats hearts alive to God's claims and devoutly appreciative of His grace. We have not, I trust, it may be truthfully said, as yet, any very large class, whether in the rural or town and city districts, who have learned to regard the church of Christ with disdain, and who scorn its claims to rule the beliefs and to guide the conduct of men. I say, as yet, for if the statement of those who have the best opportunity of knowing the facts be accepted, the emigration which is now setting in towards Canada from the larger cities of England, and which, on grounds both of humanity and patriotism ought to be welcomed, has its full proportion of those who have broken entirely their connection with the church of Christ. However, speaking of the state of things as it at present exists, we may still claim to possess the ear and the conscience of the large majority of those outside of the membership of the church. Second. There is exhibited in connection with all sections of the church, including our own, a large amount of activity in the matter of church extension. No sooner is the necessity for a new church edifice manifest, than the means to supply it are forthcoming, or at least, steps are taken towards its erection. The disposition seems to be to anticipate the wants of a growing population, rather than to lag behind them. The number of churches of every degree of size and cost which have been erected in this city during the last two years, is itself a proof of the deep interest felt by many in the moral and religious welfare of the community. After making full allowance for what is due in this connection to mere denominational zeal, there remains not a little which must be ascribed to a deep and heart-felt sympathy with those higher interests which all branches of the church, all true Christians, are