

Editorial.

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FIRST THE KINGDOM.

There is often far more anxiety felt about filling the Church, than there is about bringing sinners to Christ. The addition of a single family to a congregation is frequently the subject of congratulation among the members, while the awakening of a soul to a sense of its lost condition, or its conversion to God, is allowed to pass almost without remark. Yet "there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance;" and should not the church on earth be in full sympathy with the church of the first-born above?

We have often tried to account for this apparent anomaly. Christians not only ought to desire the glory of Christ, and the salvation of sinners, more than any earthly or selfish interest, but we are led by the Word of God to believe that all true believers actually do. The very first impulse of their new life is, to do as their Divine Master did, to seek and to save the lost, and as Andrew and Philip did—each one to find his own Simon, or Nathaniel, and bring him to Jesus. And yet we are very loth to come to the conclusion, that those who do not presently show this active interest in the spiritual growth of a church cannot be Christians.

That point we must leave to themselves to settle, between their own consciences and God who trieth our hearts. To their own Master they stand or fall. We can only repeat the inspired admonition, "Examine yourselves!"

Of the fact of this apathy, however, in many of our churches, there can be no doubt. Neither can we doubt that it is one of the chief reasons why our churches do not fill up, and why those who do come amongst us remain so often and so long unconverted. Worldly people are generally sharp enough to see whether we seek *their's* or *them*. They are too ready, in most cases, to conclude that ministers are more anxious for the *fleece* than for the *flock*. And if their natural suspiciousness is confirmed in any case, by observing that the Treasurer of the church pays them more attention than any one else, they will, not unlikely, become prejudiced against all religion, and religious people, and perhaps stumble over that stumbling-stone into perdition! We have seen men bored and button-holed for money in a way that seemed to us very likely to lead to that result.

On the other hand, a true and prayerful interest in a man's spiritual welfare, or in the spiritual prosperity of the Church, will show itself unmistakeably in ways that need no describing. It will glisten in his eyes. It will tremble in the tones of his voice. It will betray