

may so speak, by the passing over of ministers and members from one church to another. Now, it is an obvious view of such changes that they do not necessarily imply a loss to the general cause of Christ ; they resemble the transference of officers and men from one detachment of an army to another. If faithful and devoted men leave the church with which they have been connected, in consequence of admitting the conviction that she is corrupt and defective in her constitution and administration, that church sustains a great loss,—the greater, in that it is to be presumed that such men have not gone forth from her without first having testified against the evils which they could not tolerate, and warned their brethren of them, and that after all, they have been unsuccessful in their endeavours to remove them. And as a church thus deserted of her best Ministers and members is in a condition to be truly deplored, so is that church to be congratulated which is drawing to itself all who are in right earnest about their own salvation, and the advancement of the kingdom of the Redeemer in the world. On the other hand, if those who are deserting a church are of a secular spirit ; men who have no right discernment of Divine truth ; no love to the souls of men ; no zeal for the advancement of the church and the honour of the Redeemer ; then, I would say, that their departure is no loss, rather—alas that it should be so—a deliverance to the church which they have left,—as the gain of them is but that of a loss by the church which receives them.

Next in importance to the increase of consistent and faithful members and ministers in a church, is the removal from it of those who evince no true zeal for the honour of God and love to his people. The church which is casting off such members will, ere long, through the blessing of her Great Head, have their places more than supplied by others in whom the virtues and fruits of holiness shall be manifest. And, second only to the evil of having faithful men driven away from a church because of its corruptions, or through a tyrannical exercise of its discipline, is the evil of having its ranks and offices filled with merely formal professors. The church that is thus increasing may be in her