

contributed not one cent during the past fiscal year for the purpose of carrying out the Master's sacred commission—"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"! A much larger number of churches have contributed nothing towards the promotion of home evangelization. As a necessary result of this lamentable inactivity and illiberality a sort of religious stagnation, a spiritual nightmare, supervenes, Sunday Schools are neglected and allowed to die out, pulpits become permanently vacant, the regular meetings for religious worship are gradually forsaken, until nothing remains but empty houses, a few stray, gaunt mice, and frowning spires pointing silently and ominously toward heaven admonishing the observer that a day of reckoning is at hand. Might not such churches with great propriety be kindly invited to resign their position and quietly step down and out under the charge of being unsuccessful?

#### THE CAUSES ASSIGNED.

It would be impossible to review, within the narrow limits of a brief circular, the various causes which tend to hinder the Lord's work among our churches. These causes are both numerous and complicated. We may, however, advert to a few of the more prominent ones.

There can be no doubt that the primary and controlling source of the evil under consideration is simply the lack of genuine spirituality. If our hearts are not right in the sight of God, our words and deeds will scarcely be found to harmonize with the teachings of inspired truth. Paul gave a satisfactory account of the motives by which he and his co-laborers were actuated in their zealous and self-sacrificing toils when he declared that "the love of Christ constraineth us." So long as men continue to pay more attention and a larger tribute of affection to their farms, their warehouses or their fishing smacks than to their God, they will persist, as in the days of Amos, in "sacrificing unto their net and burning incense unto their drag." A sense of the goodness and mercy of our heavenly Father must become so dominant in our minds as to subordinate all worldly considerations to the higher claims of our spiritual life before we shall be willing cheerfully to consecrate all our talents, our possessions and ourselves to His service.

The lack of brotherly love and especially of denominational love, so often apparent in our communities, are fruitful causes of spiritual inactivity and religious declension. When a man ceases to manifest true affection toward the members of the household of faith, when he takes no longer an honest pride in the welfare of the church with which he is providentially connected, or in the prosperity of the denomination to whose articles of faith and practice he has subscribed, it will make comparatively little difference to him how soon either that church or that denomination shall become extinct. The death and burial of either, will be an occasion of few tears and little grief.

The absence of success in our churches is often directly traceable