

Congregationalism, or that of the United States. Our churches, too, are being multiplied in many portions of the field of Foreign Missions, and in the British Colonies apart from the Provinces of British North America.

In the north-eastern portion of the United States, they have been quite the most numerous since the days of the Puritan Fathers, either as Paedo or Anti-Paedo Baptist Churches; and are so, we believe, to the present day.

Time and want of access to documentary evidence, forbid my entering into more full details on this point. But the returns published by the American Congregational Union, show an increase in the number of churches reported during the past 4 years of 419 churches, and 27,840 members, as existing in this Northern Continent, or (including the British Provinces) a total of 2,734 churches, and 260,389 members, in the year 1860. In the Western States of the Union, Congregationalism is greatly on the increase; and as an example I would refer to the State of Michigan, in which for two years it was my privilege to labour. There, some few years since, scarcely a Congregational church existed; and a leading minister of the New School Presbyterian Church now living, used to tell ministers of our body looking for fields of labour, "that there were no churches of our order there, but plenty of Presbyterians who would be glad of their services; and as there was no difference in the doctrines professed by the two bodies, but only in church order and discipline, and that comparatively trifling, they would find but little difficulty in their conforming to such order, &c., and perhaps at length even of giving it a preference." Thus, many Congregational ministers commenced and continued their labours there. By some means, however, great numbers of the churches became Congregational, many of their members probably, as well as their ministers, having brought their principles from the East; and have gone on increasing, so that at the present day their numbers are almost if not quite equal to the Presbyterian Churches. This, perhaps, is only a type of the facts in other Western States; and may account for the anxiety lately manifested by the Presbyterian Synods to send out "Missions in *advance* of all others;" and to employ their own men and means, apart from all aid (if necessary) from the funds of the American Home Missionary Society, which, until very lately, had been a centre of united action for both bodies.

We must, however, now look at the Provinces of British North America on the Atlantic side; and here beginning with the Western Provinces, we find that within the past 23 years our churches in the Canadas have increased from about 7 to 78 (or 82 according to some returns), and containing 3,376 members. The Missionary Society here, being called upon continually to open new ground, and as few if any of the churches are becoming extinct, the number must continue to increase.

How is it, however, in our own Provinces? Here alas! we cannot report encouragingly. In New Brunswick we have not more, perhaps, than six churches, if indeed so many; and in Nova Scotia, we believe, not more than ten; and five or six of which at the present time, we fear, are without pastors. Some of them, too, much decayed; and yet the oldest among them can date back nearly or quite 100 years. There is reason also to believe, that in this Province our churches have been much more numerous than they now are, having been swallowed up among other denominations. The causes of our present weakened condition are doubtless various, and may be referred to under our next enquiry. While, however, as Paedo Baptists our numbers may be but small, yet our Congregational principles are recognised and adopted to a great extent by the Anti-Paedo Baptist Churches of these Provinces, and which are very numerous. The Presbyterian Churches, too, whose views of doctrine, including that of baptism, greatly correspond with our own, are also numerous; and considering that very many of the inhabitants of the Provinces are either directly the natives of Old Scotia or their descendants, we cannot wonder at this fact. Considering, too, that this body is conservative of the great and precious truths of the gospel, we cannot but rejoice in its increase, although it with others may have swallowed up some if not many of our ancient Congregational churches in the Province.