

Among the Congregationalists, there has not been, to my knowledge, a new church organized during the last five years, nor do I hear of any in prospect of organization. One or two mission chapels have been built in that time, but there is no immediate prospect of their becoming in turn self-sustaining and aggressive churches. How many years it has been since more than one new church of the Congregational order had been planted in the midst of New York's million and a half of population, I do not know, but certainly, I think as many as ten. Old fields have been abandoned and new meeting-houses have been built in uptown neighborhoods, but this only goes to show neglect of the work of evangelization, rather than improvement. Whether the Baptist, Presbyterian,\* and Methodist have done better I am not informed. I sincerely hope they have. If this be the state of the case at the centre, what may we reasonably expect at the circumference? Philadelphia is a religious city, strong in strong churches; but I am told by one well informed, that the churches are rapidly falling behind the increase of population. St. Louis is losing ground; Chicago is not gaining, and was never equal to her population so far as churches were concerned; and in Cincinnati the process of uniting two churches into one has of late been going on, rather than the multiplication of them. In fact, the race between the churches and the population in all our cities is rapidly becoming a stern chase, so far as the churches are concerned.

I have tried to state the case generally rather than particularly, and broadly rather than minutely; yet I think my statement is within the facts. It becomes us to survey this vast field for evangelistic work, and consider the best ways and means for reaching the end of their proper evangelization.

I. THE CHARACTER OF A CITY POPULATION. More than in the country and villages the population of the cities is cosmopolitan. It is a vast sea, in which every kind of fish is found. Foreign and native-born, men of all languages, kindred, tongues and people are here; men of all creeds, and of no creeds. Every city is a miniature world, and should challenge us to fulfill the commission of our Savior when He said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." This fact, instead of making the cities an unpromising field, should be of the greatest encouragement, and ought to challenge us to do our best and prove what we are always saying: that Christianity stands unique among the religions of the world in this—that it is the only universal religion, the only faith that is adapted to all men. The cities offer the splendid opportunity to demonstrate this; and if we were inspired with the enthusiasm of conquest for our Lord, our churches—ministers and laymen—would be alive to this great privi-

\*The Presbyterian certainly has not. She is not as strong in churches to-day as she was ten years ago.—J. M. S.