

other communions will not be slow to recognize their force, and little by little lift them up to a position among their own plans. Time and patience will bring the victory to the principles and plans which we are proud to call "our own."

Meanwhile, we stand on the bank of the ecclesiastical stream, and watch the straws.

"WHERE ARE THE NINE?"

OF ten lepers healed on one occasion by our Lord, one only returned to thank Him and "to give glory to God," and that one was a stranger, a Samaritan! The disease of which they had been cured was at once incurable by human skill, and fatal; and yet nine out of ten show no gratitude to the great Healer, and acknowledge no obligation for the blessing bestowed. What heart does not wonder at and recoil from the unparalleled baseness and ingratitude involved in such a course!

But is it unparalleled? For several years in succession the churches of Christ of nearly all evangelical communions have been largely reinforced as to *numbers* by accessions from the world. The Lord has given testimony to the word of His grace. The careless have been aroused, and the anxious have been directed and persuaded to enter the kingdom, and many a Christian pastor's heart has been gladdened by seeing the membership of His church increased and even doubled by young converts who have been brought in during these times of revival. Zion has exclaimed "who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?" But where are they?

Every Christian ought to be a worker. Every saved soul ought to be a messenger to carry the glad tidings of salvation to other souls. And not only *ought* to, but *will*, in proportion as they understand what they have been saved from, and feel the constraint of Divine love shed abroad within them.

No doubt in many cases this expectation has been realised. Indeed, we know that the spiritual force of many of our churches has been greatly augmented by these additions to their membership. The Sabbath School has felt the impetus. The prayer meeting has been better sustained. The hands of the pastor have been held up as never before, and the battle is waged with more hopefulness and success. But who are these "true yoke fellows" that so assist and cheer their pastors, and what proportion do they bear to the number of young converts received? How many of them have returned to give thanks to the Divine Healer, asking with the penitent Saul, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" "Where are the nine?"

The failure to enlist young Christians in church work is a great calamity to the churches and a grievous injury to the young converts themselves. Exercise of our gifts and graces is essential to health and growth.

Only as we improve what God has bestowed may we look for more. Where not so enlisted, the failure usually results chiefly from one of two causes: either the young people have never been taught their duty, or they do not know how to go about fulfilling it.

To both these points we would earnestly call the attention of the pastors and officers of all our churches. Let every member on being received be faithfully instructed as to the claims of Christ upon him, and directed to some part of the great harvest field where he can begin to work for him. No true Christian can ever taste the joy of saving a soul from death without desiring to renew the effort. The labourers in the vineyard are few, often, only because "no man hath hired them," and an earnest attempt to engage them in the service of the great Householder would not infrequently surprise the minister who makes it by the readiness of the response "Here am I; send me!"

Once more, then, in the name of the Lord we ask, "Where are the nine?"

Will our friends send on all the particulars of news of their church, and remember that an item to be of value should be sent immediately after the occurrence. Do not give them a chance to get stale. Let them also be short. "Brevity is the soul of wit."

We hope to make our department, "The News of the Churches," more and more complete week by week. To this end we solicit the prompt and active co-operation of every pastor and layman. We hope to see every congregation represented in "The News of the Churches."

GOVERNOR-GENERALS, whether present or future, are not always wise. The Marquis of Lorne has been lecturing some of his late constituents at Inverary. He seems to think that the world will come to an end if national church establishments fall. He may learn by a residence in Canada that all the churches are the better for the practical voluntarism here prevalent.

WE are rejoiced to learn as we go to press that some of Dr. Wilkes' admirers in Montreal are determined to celebrate his jubilee of ministerial service in a manner worthy of the occasion. They are trying to raise a money testimonial sufficiently large to place the Dr. in comfort for the rest of his life. This effort will find a ready support, not only from his friends in the Congregational body, on whose behalf he has so long and faithfully labored, but also from many outside, who will hail with joy this chance of expressing their appreciation of his efforts for the public good.

RECENTLY a lady bequeathed to Mr. Spurgeon several thousand pounds for his own personal use. Mr. Spurgeon was induced to enquire into the circumstances of the relatives of the donor, and finding they were needy, and that nothing had been bequeathed to them, he very generously divided the legacy among them.

Contributed Articles.

OUR OPPORTUNITY.

BY JOSEPH GRIFFITH.

It is a frequent complaint in certain circles that Congregationalism makes but little advance in Canada. Our churches, our ministry, our members, it is said, multiply but slowly, more slowly than in other lands, more slowly than would naturally have been anticipated here. And this is true. The complaint is no croak. It is a fact that our progress is not what it might and should be.

How is this? I hold that the conditions, generally speaking, are not at all unfavourable to the growth of Congregationalism here. I hold that Congregationalism rightly interpreted and administered would thrive wonderfully in this country. I say, "Congregationalism rightly interpreted and administered." For, to borrow a form of expression sanctioned by high authority, there is a Congregationalism *and* a Congregationalism, the seeming and the real, the false and the true. There is a Congregationalism that is such merely in name and appearance: there is a Congregationalism that has none of the essence of Congregationalism, that has repudiated its spirit, that has denied its power. And we have had our share of this in Canada—probably, more than our share. I know that they have had an abundance of it in the United States, and have still. They have there a very High Church type of Congregationalism, a something that requires a great deal of organization, that makes very many official posts and uses a vast amount of machinery, a something that is very conservative too, that appeals much oftener to the dead traditions of the past than to the living sentiments of the present. Now, for that kind of Congregationalism there is no room in Canada. There are other and better and more efficient ways of doing the work it would do. And every religious denomination should have some distinctive mission, otherwise it has no right to exist. Of a spurious, bastard Congregationalism, a Congregationalism that forever apes the peculiarities of other denominations and forgets its own, we have no need. Such a thing cannot succeed here. But of a Congregationalism that knows what it is and why it is, a Congregationalism that accepts its own responsibilities, we have need. And that must succeed. There is work for it to do, work that ~~cannot be done except by its instrumentality~~, work that is not likely to be done, at least, except by its instrumentality. And if this work is assumed by us and carried on earnestly and vigorously, we must obtain a commanding position in the land. Let me justify this assertion.

Congregationalism should foster a liberal and progressive theology. It always does so when it is the genuine article. It teaches and accustoms its adherents to inquire and think and decide for themselves. It has no stereotyped confessions, no fixed standards of orthodoxy. It has no ruts of belief and utterance in which everybody must run. If it has, then it ceases to be itself. Now, I think that it is clear enough to the most superficial observer that such a candidate for public favour has a splendid chance in Canada now. We stand all but alone in this respect. The leading Christian communions of the land are utterly at variance with us. And we may as well admit at once that there is an "irrepressible conflict" between them and us, and go into the battle as if we meant to fight. If we do this, what will the result be? Whatever is liberal and progressive in opinion will naturally go with us. We shall win the sympathy and enthusiastic, faithful service of all those who feel the force of modern ideas. The young men of the country, the intelligent, inquisitive ones, would be won. And let me say, these men are far more numerous than is generally known. I have associated, especially in our larger cities, with many in different religious communions who belong to the class I have mentioned. These men should be with us. They would do more good with us than anywhere else. They would be more helped and strengthened with us than anywhere else. And further, there is this fact to be taken into consideration. These men will be largely lost to Christianity unless they find some type of religion other than they find where they are now. They cannot much longer live on the mediæval, narrow, irrational notions which are set before them by their guides and instructors. We may catch them and we may save them, and in order that we may do this, the one requisite is that we be true to our professed principles.

Then, again, Congregationalism should be synonymous with freedom in ecclesiastical life. I know that nominal Congregationalism is not always so. True Congregationalism always is. It gives the largest rights—with the largest responsibilities, of