

field. There are large congregations, a good Sunday School, and a devoted people. We give them student supply during the long vacation; the rest of the year, they carry on their Sunday School and prayer meetings. If we could afford to support a faithful man here for a few years, there is every reason to believe we would have a strong church; and certainly a resident missionary is needed in the locality.

On reviewing my visits among the churches down here (and they were more thoroughly visited than any former year of my work), I would say, while there is not much to encourage, there is nothing to discourage, and much to stimulate. I think the long-continued season of commercial depression has come to an end. Some of those who have been away for years in the States are returning, and many more are expected to follow their example. The churches are better organized, and united. More careful as to the men whom they call to the pastorate. Liberality is being developed. There is a very general wish to have our own trained men. The samples of our students they have had among them, have made favorable impressions. If we can encourage by more liberal mission grants, send down from time to time some of our own men, or at least *tried* men from the west; a few years of such care and sacrifice will place our churches in these parts on a sound basis, and they will be able to do some aggressive work, as well as consolidate their own work existing.

Very truly yours,

Kingston, Ont.

THOMAS HALL.

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF THE UNITED STATES

BY GEORGE HAGUE, MONTREAL.

In attending the recent Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States, at Worcester, I was surprised to hear by a formal report made by the Secretary, that they numbered over 4,500 (4569 is the exact number), and that 254 new ones had been added during the past year. But 89 had been dropped from the roll during the year's revision.

The Churches in Great Britain number about 3,500; in Canada we have about 120.

It is not many years since those of the United

States numbered about the same as those in Britain; and going back a period not so long ago, there were not more than 1,200 or 1,500.

There has thus been, during the last thirty years, a most vigorous growth so far as numbers are concerned. The Churches are expanding as the population increases, and as new States and Territories are added to the public domain. This increase has one specially gratifying feature, namely, that there are now some hundreds of Churches in the South, a region where before the war there was not one. No Congregational Church could live in an atmosphere poisoned by slavery. Now that these vast States are filled with free men our Churches can both live and grow. The Southern Churches are at present young and small, but they are growing and full of hopefulness.

These 4,500 Churches only meet by representation once in three years, not annually as we do. But this triennial Council takes a broad survey of the whole field, and hears reports of all the operations connected with the Churches. Their whole work, whether educational, benevolent or missionary, or whether on the Home field or scattered throughout the world, is brought under review. I wish to give a general idea of what this great bird's eye view really amounted to.

It will be interesting to note:—First, *What* these Churches are; second, *Where* they are, and third, what they are *doing*.

As to what these Churches are, I judge that they are organized on the same basis of fellowship with ourselves, and that they hold substantially the same doctrines, that they have the same tendencies towards a more ornate worship, and in some cases to what are called more liberal doctrines, that they are largely imbued with an element of piety and consecration, and that amongst their older members at least many precious family traditions of piety and gentleness are preserved. In fact they are such in general that any of us would feel at home either in their Churches, their Sunday-schools, or their prayer-meetings.

We sometimes let our apprehension of the bad things so prevalent in the United States, color our views of the Churches. But this is unjust. The Churches are the very forces that are fighting and testifying against these things. It would be as absurd to look askance upon the Churches of