

Methodists, the Bible Christians, the Society of Friends, English Presbyterians, and Unitarians, make an aggregate of £816,422. It is estimated that the sums yearly contributed in the way of free-will offerings for general and local purposes by the several religious bodies in Great Britain cannot be less than eight millions sterling. Methodists of all classes sum up over 700,000, the Wesleyan numbering 440,000. The Baptists claim nearly 280,000, and the Congregationalists 306,000. Our Independent brethren in England, however, are not partial to statistics, and any estimate of their numbers can only be tentative. The admirable Year Book edited by our friend Dr. Hannay gives no information regarding either the numbers in, and financial strength of, our English churches. In this respect English Congregationalists seem to stand alone among the dissenting bodies of the mother land.

THE *Congregational Year Book* of the United States for 1884 reports the total membership of the denomination at 396,246. Of these 133,347 are males and 157,781 females. The total addition was 28,377; 14,862 being on profession. The losses by death, dismission and discipline were 19,362. There were 6,374 adult and 5,366 infant baptisms. There are 4,016 churches, of which 941 are vacant, 936 have pastors, 2,149 acting pastors. Of the 3,696 ministers 2,659 are in pastoral work. The total of benevolent contributions from 3,077 churches is put down at \$2,638,619. The home expenditures of 2,616 churches amounted to \$3,953,227. The net increase of the members was 8,627 of which 5,554 were females.

### THE CHRISTIAN IN BUSINESS.

Where he ought to be, doing his Father's business, whether dumping a cart or presiding over a bank.

I desire to say a few scriptural words to those who are in the business of life, doing its drudgery, hewing its wood and drawing its water, with, as they sometimes think, little leisure to be good. Men, women, whose talents do not lie either in prayer-meeting or in class, whether of Sunday school or of needy home, where desk or bench, room or home

employs their talents and their time—to such I would speak an encouraging word.

It will not serve God or bless man to live in a fool's paradise, striving to wind oneself too high for sinful man beneath the sky. Some one must bake the bread, and earn it too; some one must till the field and build the house; were all hermits the world would not gain even in sanctity, nor would preaching, though designed in its foolishness to spread the gospel, bridge our rivers or carry the load across the deep.

Scripture recognizes business. Paul for instance, writing to Titus concerning the things wanting to be set in order, says (iii. 13): "Let our people also learn to profess honest occupations for necessary wants, that they be not unfruitful."

"Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men;" writes the wise man, Prov. xxii. 29. Business therefore has a recognized place in the economy of grace, and therefore to it the Christian may be lawfully devoted. How?

At cross-roads or at turnings, sometimes are placed guide-boards, finger-posts, pointing e.g., "To Jerusalem—10 miles." I remember one blown over which some wag had stuck up in a corner of the fence the opposite way, and there it stood, unblushingly pointing directly contrary. A guide-post perverted. Some "witnessing Christians" are like that guide post, birth or prejudice has stuck them down, there they stand until some other notion shifts them, then as mechanically and persistently they point in an opposite direction. How different from the companion guide, who cheers your weary step, gently chides your wandering, and with loving hand or voice points—this is the way, walk therein; and then, when a safe resting place is reached, causes you to lie down and rest in comfort and in peace. We need some living guides along the dusty lanes and in the busy marts of life, not dead heartless sign-boards, and thus the Christian in business may find his allotted sphere.

By business in the subject before us, understand—without attempting any logical definition—the ordinary bread-winning occupations of life, which "keep the pot boiling" on the hearth of home and put something in the larder that, when hungry school boys or