

RELIGIOUS DECLENSION.

While so much is being said with regard to the wonderful results of revival efforts throughout the country, it is well to look on the other side of the picture, and see what the signs of the times indicate. In a recent number of the *Congregationalist* is an editorial, from which we make the following suggestive extracts, as showing the condition of religious interest in the sections referred to. Speaking especially of Vermont, the *Congregationalist* says:--

"It is found that about sixty-nine churches have died out altogether in that state, or been united to others. It is found that the membership of Congregational churches, there, has diminished by about 3000 in the last fifty years. It is found that, of those residents who live two miles or more from church, but about one third ever attend it. It is believed that of an entire population of 332,268, from 100,000 to 125,000, besides invalids and little children, *never* hear the gospel.

"'Trust in God, and keep your powder dry,' was the old Yankee war-cry that did the business for the enemy; but it won't be long, if things are allowed to go on as they are going, before we shall find that our powder is all so damp that its goodness is gone. Our strength will have flattened out into weakness. Our churches will be having only a name to live, while actually dead from removal, and rust, and general inefficiency. Barbarism will have been too much for them. We have no idea that Vermont is specially a sinner in these respects. It is indeed our impression that every New England state could, at least in some of its latitudes and longitudes, quite parallel her figures."

In commenting on the foregoing the *New York Observer* says:--

"We have been hopeful that the discouraging statements could be explained in such a way that there would be no ground for serious apprehension as to the future of evangelical religion. It is evident, however, that there is considerable alarm among those who are most interested."

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