

## Messenger and Visitor

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### The Summer Exodus and the Churches.

The growing disposition of the people who live in cities and towns to seek the greater freedom and purer atmosphere of the country during the summer is having a quite serious effect upon the Sunday congregations and upon church work generally, even in our own country by the sea, where the comparative coolness of the atmosphere and smallness of our towns make the summer resort much less a necessity than it is for the dwellers in the hot and crowded cities of the United States. In St. John, for example, where the summers are exceptionally cool for this latitude, it is within bounds to say that for two or three months during the summer so many families are living out of town, and so many who reside in the city go out on Saturday and spend Sunday in the country, that in some churches less than half the regular church-goers are present at the Sunday services. The otherwise vacant seats are in part, and only in part, filled by summer visitors, and the attendance at the prayer meetings is diminished by perhaps a still larger ratio than the Sunday congregations. This condition of things, which is necessarily somewhat discouraging to pastors and their fellow-workers, could be accepted more cheerfully if there were grounds for believing that what the city congregation is losing some country congregation is gaining, by the summer exodus of city church-goers. Too frequently the regular church-goer in the city becomes a most irregular attendant, if an attendant at all, upon the means of grace when the summer home is reached. Whatever advantages the summer out of town may have in respect to the physical welfare of man, woman or child, it is more than doubtful if the moral and religious welfare of the family is being served by the custom now becoming so prevalent. In view of present conditions and tendencies in regard to this matter, it seems that Christian people ought to make it an object so to locate their summer residences that their families should not be deprived of the advantages of regular attendance upon public worship and of Sunday School instruction, and that their own personal influence on the Lord's Day should be of a positive Christian character. If one place is to sustain loss by the absence of a Christian, then the place to which he goes should be blessed by his presence. If the city pastor is to be afflicted by the loss of many of his people, then he ought at least to have the consolation of knowing that some hard-working brother pastor is being encouraged and helped by their co-operation.

In the large cities of the United States the summer exodus of course causes a still more serious interference with the regular services of the churches, involving the closing for a time of many places of worship and a lamentably small attendance at most of those which are kept open. The Congregationalist has been at the pains to collect and publish the facts in reference to the number of services held and the number of persons in attendance at the morning service on Sunday, the 18th of August,—a fine and comparatively cool day—at 37 churches, the principal Protestant churches embraced in the district generally known as Boston proper, and not including such districts as Charlestown, Roxbury, Dorchester, Brighton, South and East Boston. The list embraced six Baptist churches, seven Congregational, seven Unitarian, five Episcopal, four Methodist Episcopal, one Swedenborgian, two Presbyterian, two Universalist, two Colored and a congregation of Christian Scientists. Of the 37 churches eleven were closed, and the total attendance at the 26 open churches was 5,525.

Of this number 2,191 were in the six Baptist churches, and of the total number 1,550 were at Tremont Temple. The second largest congregation was that of the Christian Scientists, numbering 1,100. Apart from these two congregations, the average Boston congregation on that fine August Sunday was evidently not a large one. In only five of the twenty-six churches was the pastor in the pulpit. One of the seven Unitarian churches was open, and three only of the six congregational churches. The Baptist churches had four Sunday Schools in operation, the Congregationalists one, the Methodists four, the Unitarians none, and the Episcopalians none. In reference to the facts and suggestions of its figures gathered by the Congregationalist, that paper says: "We frankly confess that the showing is not an encouraging one to those who look upon the church as an institution essential to the best life of the individual and the nation."

We believe that the attitude of a church toward the world throughout the year determines its power over the masses rather than its practice with reference to the summer solstice. The question of summer closing, then, is to be considered by every church from the point of view of its proper service to its normal constituency. The church that is in active business for the Lord during the fall and winter and spring will be less likely to suspend that business for any long period during the summer. Indeed it is noticeable that the Baptist denomination which registered on August 18 the largest attendance—2,191 persons—has won a reputation for exceptional aggressiveness in Boston during the last few years, and this characteristic note may have something to do with the fact that all its six churches are open during the summer. In other words the churches that are seeking the masses with the greatest determination and persistence are the ones most likely to get them summer and winter alike."

### Editorial Notes.

—The Jarvis St. Baptist church of Toronto, in accordance with a custom of several years standing, and as a practical protest against the principle of the exemption of church property from ordinary taxation, has recently paid into the municipal treasury the sum of \$587.

—One of our ministers was speaking half regretfully of the fact that he had never been able to lay up anything against a rainy day, but added that it had been his observation however that ministers who possessed much property did not as a general rule have a very fruitful ministry. However this may be, it is well to consider that the results which a minister of the gospel must chiefly desire are so infinitely greater in importance than earthly wealth that he who is enabled to achieve them may well be consoled for his poverty.

—The decision of the Imperial Privy Council in respect to the validity of the legislation, embodied in the Manitoba Prohibitory Liquor Law is expected within a few weeks. This decision is awaited with interest, as it will of course have an important bearing upon the question of provincial prohibition generally, since if the validity of the Manitoba law shall be affirmed, that affirmation will involve the validity of a law on similar lines in other Provinces. This is of special interest in view of the fact that Premier Ross of Ontario has recently reaffirmed the declaration made by his predecessor in office, Sir Oliver Mowatt, some years ago, committing himself and party to the fullest measure of provincial prohibition constitutionally obtainable.

—It is estimated that at the beginning of the nineteenth century there were not more than four or five million copies of the Bible in the whole world, and the Scriptures had been translated into only about fifty different languages. Now the British and Foreign Bible Society alone is issuing nearly five million copies of the Bible yearly, and is giving the Holy Scriptures to the world in 375 languages, 230 languages and dialects having been added to the Society's list during the reign of Victoria. These are facts that seem worthy of consideration by those who insist that the moral condition of the world grows steadily worse and worse. Such a belief in the face of such facts seems to argue very little confidence in the Word of God to enlighten and elevate mankind.

—King Edward VII. completed sixty years of life on Saturday, the 9th inst. It was his first birthday as King, and though there seems to have been no general disposition either in Great Britain or in Canada to observe the day as a public holiday, the people are doubtless none the less hearty in their sentiments of good-will and loyalty toward the reigning monarch. Rumors have been rife of late that the King is suffering from a cancerous affection of the throat, and although these rumors

have been emphatically contradicted, it would be a matter of great satisfaction to the people of the Empire in general to be fully assured that there is nothing in the condition of the King's health to give occasion for alarm. King Edward has made his birthday the occasion for conferring the title Prince of Wales upon the Duke of Cornwall and York, and the act has been received in England with a chorus of approval.

—A statistical summary of Baptist interests and work in Maine, compiled by *Zion's Advocate*, shows that there are now in the State 245 Baptist churches, the same number as last year. The aggregate membership of the churches is 20,018, but the resident membership is only 12,436, which would seem to indicate that a good many people move away from Maine as well as from our Provinces. The number of baptisms for the year was 516, 24 less than last year, and the net gain in membership for the year is 189. The number of Sunday schools in the State is 18,072, with an average attendance of 10,132. The gain in Sunday school attendance over that of the previous year was 670. The number of Young People's Societies, mostly societies of Christian Endeavor, is 118, with 4,033 active and 1,615 associate members. The total amount contributed for benevolent purposes is \$24,196, a gain over last year of \$621.36. The grand total of money raised for all purposes, including some expenses, is \$171,828. The value of church property held by the Baptists of Maine is \$928,470.

—In reference to the murderer of President McKinley, the Government of the United States, through its constituted channels, has spoken its last words and performed its last act, and the moral sentiment of that nation and of the world approves the justice of the sentence so promptly executed upon the assassin. But what of the conditions out of which this man came and which made him what he was? Will the cutting off of Czolgosz serve to discourage and repress the spirit of anarchy or will it but make it more fiercely insane and reckless? For generations and for centuries the venom which enflamed itself in Czolgosz and struck to death the President of the United States, had been generating and ranking in the blood of his moral ancestors, for this man was but one of a numerous brood of social monsters which have long been breeding in the world's moral swamps. If crowned heads are to have repose evidently something must be done besides cutting off assassins. The swamps which exhale the moral malaria that poisons the minds and hearts of men must be drained of the black waters of hate, built up with the wholesome soil of truth and watered from the springs of human sympathy. It is becoming very evident in these days that nations, no more than individuals, can afford to be indifferent to the conditions of their own back yards or to the back yards of their neighbors.

—It is said that in none of the religious bodies of the United States is there at the present time greater evidence of vigorous growth than in the case of the Disciples of Christ. At their annual meeting held this year in Minneapolis, some 3,500 delegates were in attendance. The amounts raised for the home work during the year by the National Society, the State Societies and the Women's Board aggregated more than \$280,000, and the record of the work done shows the organization of 277 new churches and the addition of nearly 25,000 members. The Church Extension Board, a department of the National Society, has a fund of over \$300,000. During the past year it has aided in the building of 80 churches in 28 States. The church extension work is evidently being carried forward with great zeal. A suggestion that one thousand churches and preachers pledge themselves to hold protracted missionary services during the coming winter—which would mean that each church give its minister's time and service for ten days to conduct a revival in some struggling church—met with so hearty a response that it seems likely to be carried out. The Disciples are also active in Foreign Missions, although hardly to the same degree as in their home mission work. The women and young people of the denomination are especially zealous in this department of work. At present missionary fields are occupied in twelve foreign lands in every continent but South America. The churches gathered in these fields number 7,000 members, with upwards of 8,000 children in the schools.

—The Rev. J. W. Clarke, lately pastor of the Free Baptist church at Woodstock, and formerly for a number of years pastor of the Waterloo St. church, St. John, died on Oct. 12th ultimo. During his residence and ministry in this city we had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Clarke frequently, and in common as we believe with all who knew him, came to entertain for him feelings of the warmest regard. Mr. Clarke was justly esteemed and loved by a very wide circle of friends for his character as a man and his ability and faithfulness as a Christian minister. Death, following an attack of typhoid fever, has cut him down in the midst of his years. His brethren in the ministry bear eloquent testimony to his goodness and faithfulness. Rev. C. T. Phillips writes in the *Religious Intelligencer*:

"That brother Clarke possessed, in an eminent degree, strong personality, magnetic qualities, a large sym-