

turn toward the "pattern showed in the Mount." Depravity, surviving even in disciples, has brought degeneracy. The lapse of time has seen a relapse of spiritual life, till few features are left which marked the apostolic Church. Behold worship decline until the censer is more than the incense; the priest and altar, than the lamb and the fire; until the artistic and the æsthetic displace the scriptural and the spiritual! See service decay, until most disciples content themselves with a hired proxy, and some begrudge and withhold even the hire! The primitive school is no more; and more zeal is often shown for many converts than for growth and strength in stalwart and serviceable disciples. The home has too often sunk to the level of the club, exclusive and seclusive, where self rules, and caste bars out the very classes whose one hope and uplift lie in the Church. Pity indeed if the cosmopolitan sheet, let down from God, to gather of every kind, counting none common or unclean whom God's grace cleanses, gives place to a human hammock, woven of dainty threads of gold and silver, delicately embroidered by worldly art, and fringed with fastidious culture, in which the socially elect may swing at ease at a safe height above the level of the vulgar and the contaminating touch of the common folk!

Reformation must begin at the house of God, or reconstruction of society will at least be indefinitely delayed. To accomplish her social mission, the reforming power needs reform. Salt without saltness can neither savor nor save.

Facts must be faced and felt; and two facts are colossal and conspicuous: first, the Church has largely lost living touch with the people; and, secondly, what is worse, disciples have largely lost sympathetic touch with each other. The mission of the Church is thus in peril, and the basis of co-operation is at risk.

The masses, so called, are alien and alienated from the Church. In Great Britain not over two or at most three per cent of the working classes go to any place of worship. There, as here, thousands live without benefit of Church and die without "benefit of clergy," often the first visit of a minister being when a soul that has gone to its account has left a body behind for burial. In great centres of population, like Boston and Brooklyn, Buffalo and Chicago, there has been such decrease in proportion of churches to population that fifty years ago there was twice if not thrice the provision there is to-day. To candid and observing eyes it is awfully patent that, whatever progress society is making in civilization, like Cain, it is moving away from the presence of the Lord. The civilization is, alas! godless, and often God-defying! There have been golden ages, such as those of Egypt under the Ptolemies; of Athens, under Pericles; Rome, under Augustus; Italy, under Leo the Tenth; Russia, under Ivan the Fourth; France, under Louis the Fourteenth; England, under Elizabeth; Judea, under Solomon; but they were all ages of moral profligacy. America may be in her golden age; but never was anarchy more defiant or danger more imminent! Liberty itself is running to license.