

well look on with a certain grim satisfaction at this partial realisation of his wildest prophecies.

Why not? We have already a Bible arranged to further the interests of a certain political party, a Bible emasculated to please the Romanists, why, then, not have Bibles to suit every taste? One man would wish the commandments cut down; another, every sentence against divisions cut out; others, the word Church suppressed. Mr. Ross and his friends have no monopoly in this matter.

#### THE CHURCH AND THE MORALS OF THE DAY.

WITHOUT any approach to prudery, for which there is no sort of necessity it must be owned, notwithstanding all that can be said to the contrary, that the condition of morals of the present time is far from satisfactory. It is not difficult indeed to point backwards to days when possibly some things were far worse than they are now, and when language was used 'in Society' which would not be tolerated just at present. On the other hand it may be questioned if 'Agnosticism' and even downright 'Disbelief' were then allowed to assert themselves as they now do; and the results upon the morals of the day are not at all unnatural, though they be frightful and pernicious. But this is not all, and it is not the worst; unbelief has much to answer for; but it appears that gross immoralities are sometimes connected with some of the externals of religion. This is fully admitted; but what causes so strange a phenomenon? What so likely as the prevalence of an idea that, although some attention to things religious is very desirable, there is sufficient uncertainty about the whole matter to render much strictness of life unnecessary? Impurity vaunts itself where it is little suspected, and to an extent that is inflicting much evil on this country. The acknowledged purity of the Court for more than half a century has had much good influence, but the selfishness and lustfulness of the ungoverned affections, even in what is regarded as 'high Society,' have broken beyond all bounds, and recent revelations have proven that in the higher ranks of society are found men and women whose *abandon* outstrips and exceeds anything of a similar kind amongst the lower ranks. Amongst the latter it is, alas! too common for young women to be led astray by young men of their own social position, but it is not often that the young woman so far puts away every sense of decency as to go forth to the house of another and seek there for the company she may viciously desire. It is a terrible conclusion, but it is too probably a correct conclusion, that the immoralities of some of the higher classes of Society are even worse and lower in their degradation than are the immoralities of any other class. Public attention has of late been much attracted to this frightful scandal, and proofs of degradation amongst those who might have been, and ought to have been, charming, virtuous, bright and happy, have become during the last few months so numerous and so plain that Society

must begin to practice a better code of morals generally, or the results must be fraught with danger to this country. And it may be suspected with too much reason that there be other outrages upon the morals of some of the opulent and of some of those who value long lines of ancestry which, while administering the due reward of sin (as sin ever does) are sad to contemplate. Perhaps, this, too will 'come out' some day, and at last the immoral will find that after all sin cannot be trifled with as they thought it could be, but that the recompense of a man's work is rendered to him. As regards the injury caused to Society by the publication of the wrongdoings of mankind, it may be confidently affirmed that there are few things worse (except certain novels, largely read by ladies, and some of them written by ladies) than the columns of the details of sundry trials and scenes in a Law Court which young ladies read freely, and, it may be feared, comment upon with other young ladies very perniciously.

The whole tone of Society has greatly altered for the worse, of late years, as regards Christianity and the Church, and the results are beginning to show themselves. How is the Lord's Day used now by myriads, and amongst others by many of the religious ladies of the land? Once a-day to church, a few criticizing comments upon the anthem, or some hymn, or about the sermon, make up the 'religion' of the day, the remainder of which is freely occupied with letter-writing, as the post office can show, and with reading of light books, novels and newspapers. Such ladies become presently the wives of the young men of their period. Is it wonderful if they do not make good wives? The remedy belongs to the Church. The question is whether she will fearlessly, lovingly and wisely, but distinctly, do her duty? The teaching and the preaching can be, and must be, made more distinct and pointed, without being needlessly offensive. It is useless to keep on preaching mere doctrines, or sentiment, or history, or anything else, unless the practical side of all be brought home. It was said a few months ago of a popular preacher in a very large church, that 'They all liked him till he came to bring home to them the importance of purity.' But it must be done, or this country will be in danger. There is much that is rotten, and it must be excised. The Church Catechism has been kept in abeyance too long, and has given place too much to sentimental sermons. The Church Catechism must be catechised into the people. Men and women—young and old—must be made to know their privileges and their responsibilities as being baptized, and that they ought, therefore, to be dead to sin, buried to sin, risen to a better life, and therefore to 'mortify their earthly members.' People must be taught to keep their body in temperance, soberness and chastity. Who amongst the erring brothers and erring sisters of whom so much that is evil has been made known were ever taught, trained, catechised, or preached to, as St. Paul would have treated them? The novel and letter-writing have taken the place of catechising.

The lounge and the perusal of some smart critique upon the Bible or the preacher have taken the place of devotion. Primitive high morality has given place to ironical speeches against Christianity, until a licentious lunge by a bold skeptic has proved successful, and the restraints of Christianity have given place to the broadest utterances of infidelity. A 'Society for the Reformation of Manners' appears to be almost demanded. But, surely, such a Society exists already? Is not the Church of God intended to be this? Is it not this? What manner of men ought members of the Church to be? Here is the true force for remedying the terribly immoral state of society. If only the clergy and the laity will take the matter in hand, as Church people ought to take it, this pestilence would be driven from our midst; but there must be devotedness and devotion, not in the clergy only but in the laity as well. Sunday must be treated once again, by Christians, as the Christian Sabbath, as the Lord's Day, as the Sunday or first day of the week. A better example at home is often needed in this particular. The people of rank and fashion must find their way to church (as their respected ancestors did) for evening prayer as well as on Sunday morning. Men as well as women must be brought to attend church, and the services must be hearty, manly, intelligent, and good, and the sermon clear, plain, loving and homely. Fathers and mothers must set a good specimen of a sound Christian practical life. All the sentiment, and doctrine, and fine preaching in the world, will not meet this fearful evil, although the clergy must be circumspect in their language.

But the root of this social cancer must be eradicated or England will suffer fearfully. The process of cure is certain, but only if it is done on right principles. Let fathers and mothers begin at home. Let the Church be active in catechising all sorts and conditions of the people. Let people be taught that their bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost, as St. Paul taught the baptized Corinthians, and, starting thence, let very much more follow out from this 'foundation truth.' Let another of the six 'foundation truths' (Confirmation, or the laying-on of hands) be more frequently administered, *after* due, reverent, and devout 'preparation.' Above all, let Churchmen, whether clergy or laity, live true lives of real devotion and set a good example.

No law of man will touch this horrible disease; the Church can, with the Master's help, remove it. It is high time to do so.—H. G. O. in *Church Bells*.

#### RELIGIOUS LIBERALITY.

##### TRUE AND FALSE.

The word "Liberal" at first meant "free born," and, being used to distinguish such persons from slaves and bondsmen, came by degrees to signify the sort of qualities to be looked for in them, which are commonly lacking in a slave class. Such are, amongst others, education—we still speak of a "liberal education," when we mean a wide and broad one, covering many subjects,—refinement, openness, candour, unselfishness, large-mindedness, and generosity in giving. This last meaning is the one which has taken most hold, and is commonly intended when the word "Liberal" is used without any further explanation.