

*left to take care of themselves, and that our present policy and methods are a sad and conspicuous failure in both particulars.* And our condition is waxing worse and worse every year, and on a gigantic scale of proportions. 'The church is fast losing ground *relatively*, as to population, and *actually*, as to its hold on the masses, and its restraining and evangelizing influence on the whole community. Under the very shadow of our costly and stately churches, and in spite of the ten millions of money given yearly to foreign and home missions, and to the various works of charity and benevolence among us, there are to-day millions of souls as ignorant, as degraded, as godless, as abandoned to iniquity, as any community in heathendom! The gospel exerts no more influence on them, or over them, except it be to excite their hatred and contempt, than if they lived in Africa! The church, with all her institutions, and machinery and appliances, does not so much as touch the hem of their garments; nay, they are bitterly *hostile* to it, and to its teachings. The ministry they denounce, the Sabbath they scout, the laws and the restraints of virtuous society they set at naught, and a feeling is growing up among them not only adverse to Christianity and the church and Christian society, but absolutely destructive to them. Many will question the truth of such sweeping statements, and cry out against them as exaggerations. But it will be only those who have not been, or who will not be, at the pains of studying the problem in the light of existing facts and tendencies.

Take an illustration or two, which is better for purposes of argument than general statement. We select the city of Brooklyn, where the writer happens to reside, once designated "The City of Churches," and doubtless above the average of city population in point of intelligence and social standing. The population of Brooklyn in half a century has advanced from a few thousand to full 800,000. But statistics prove that the church, instead of keeping pace with the incoming population, has fallen so far behind that its relative strength to-day is *tenfold less than it was three decades ago*; indeed, so far as church accommodations for the Protestant population are concerned, it *actually makes a worse showing than any other city in the land!* The Presbyterian, Congregational and Reformed (Dutch) churches—once in the ascendant, and which, it might be said, had the right of domain—have added little or nothing to their number and strength in the last twenty years! While several new churches have been started, so many have died or been consolidated that the number to-day is but a trifle in excess of that 20 years ago. Hence this great city, rising into such prominence, is a city of relatively few churches. And the most of these are in the older part of the city. The outlying wards, where the main growth is, are poorly supplied, while the older and wealthy down-town churches leave them to struggle with