

What's Wrong with the Church?

FIRST—THE STATEMENT.

THERE seems to be but one opinion. A tidal wave has swept over the Church carrying all before it. The ship has not yet foundered, but is foundering. There is no pilot on board; the crew are incompetent, and a leak is slowly allowing the waters of ruin to fill and sink the ship of salvation. No friendly star points out the course to steer; fog and mist are everywhere. "We wait for light, but behold obscurity, for brightness, but we walk in darkness." The planks of theological standards have been as ruthlessly ripped up as though they were but a party promise. Machinery is there, but no fire, heat nor steam. Everything is wired for lighting, but there is no dynamo. The ship floats, but in a stagnant sea, and the very atmosphere is too sleepy to fill the languid sails.

Many pictures of the captain exist. Nor is there ever any deviation from his simpering and sexless features. Clerically attired, with hair parted faultlessly in the middle, surrounded by ladies—not healthy domestic ones—he appears incapable of a thought, action or expression worthy your attention. To complete the unhappy metaphor, the rudder is without control, and whenever an evil wind up blows, she will be driven on to the rocks which await her complete destruction.

The formula "What's wrong with the Church?" goes without challenge. No defence is forthcoming but, instead, an answer is sought to the question without any enquiry into the truth of the proposition.

It is the business of this pamphlet to take up this proposition and to answer this question.

There have been many books written lately on this subject. Most of them are novels and doubtless remunerative to their authors. Such books as "Holy Orders," "The Soldier of the Future," "The Master Christian," and "The Inside of the Cup" were written to illustrate the weaker side of the Church, and one worthy of mention as occupying a higher plane is "The State of the Church," by Andrew Murray. It is cheaper and better, more sympathetic, more practical and doubtless less remunerative to the author than the others.

But all seem agreed that the Church is dying out, and is no longer able to cope with conditions. Her ministers are represented as standing aghast at conditions they are impotent to ameliorate.

One other feature follows nearly all these productions. While the Church is criticised, the only practical remedy offered is the altruistic example of the author who secures one dollar and fifty cents for his or her effusion. In writing a statement of the case at this time, it is likely to occur to someone that Uzza reached out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it—and God smote him for his error. But this our effort is no attempt to uphold a tottering fabric, but a statement of fact to strengthen feeble knees and to comfort those who are afraid.

Recently I passed through a town where an evening had been spent in a Church! in a public discussion on the subject, "What's Wrong with the Church?" During the whole evening while many