

### "THE LAPSED MASSES."

The members of the Hamilton Ministerial Association are going to try to find out, at their next meeting, why so many people do not go to church. Rev. John Morton will read a paper on "The Church and Her Estranged Children," and other ministers will give their views. The question is one that has puzzled laymen, and many will be very glad if the preachers are able to decide it. Perhaps there is no church-room for the whole population of a city like this, but it is certain that all the available room is not utilized. Whose fault is it? Are the people to blame? Or the preachers? Or is the system of religion at fault? Do those who attend the churches not in such a way as to keep others out? Or are the non-church-going people too proud, too stingy, too lazy or too ignorant to cast in their lot with those who compose the congregations?

The seats in the churches are comfortable. The music is, as a rule, excellent. The services are short and not tedious, and they are held at convenient hours. We can sympathize with the inclination of a workman to lie abed on Sunday morning, after having been obliged to breakfast by lamplight the other six mornings, in order to get to his work at 7 a. m., but surely he could get his sleep out and be tidied up before 11 o'clock, and he must have been stirring long before the 7 p. m. service begins. In some cases the lack of good clothes and of money to put on the plate may deter from attendance at church, but we noticed that workmen and their wives turned out by hundreds to hear Frank Fogg talk in the Opera House a few years ago; they kept their seats and gave attention for more than two hours, and few of them failed to honor the collection plate. He was talking about wages and bread and butter. Are those subjects of more importance than the destiny of immortal souls?

We do not propose to solve the problem for our friends the ministers. It is too deep for us. But we venture to suggest, as a branch topic which needs clearing up, that there is a widespread feeling that the preachers are not thorough believers in the doctrines they preach, and that a little more of the ardor of conviction would prove a drawing card. Years ago, when higher education was not so common, the circuit riders at a camp meeting or a protracted revival service thundered away in dead earnest. Whether the topic was the pains of hell or the love and pity of Christ, it was plain that the preacher believed every word he spoke, and the wickedest man in the congregation never doubted the preacher's sincerity. Then most people went to church, some perhaps only to visit and gossip, but most of them to worship; now many do not go to church at all, and of those who do go, many are spectators of, and not partakers in, the worship. Is it a misnomer to call us a Christian people?

To doubt the divine inspiration of one word of the Old or New Testament used to be accounted sacrilege. Now doctors of divinity tell us that we cannot look to the Bible to teach us what Christianity is, because "the Bible is not a book, but a library of many books, written in different ages, by authors whose names are in some cases unknown or disputed, containing here and there statements that cannot be reconciled with the laws accepted by science, or even with historical fact, and disfigured by variations, corruptions and interpolations of the text, which take all the energy of modern scholarship to remove them." The Greek version of the Old Testament differs from the Hebrew, inserting, omitting and altering, and even the Hebrew version contains books which are rejected by Hebrew commentators. In orthodox England, it is contended, since the publication of the Revised Version, that St. Paul did not write the Epistle to the Hebrews and that St. Jude wrote the second Epistle of Peter. "But what, perhaps, will impress modern readers more than any other fact is, that the Lord's Prayer itself is recognized by the Revised Version to have been corrupted by the addition of the concluding doxology, and that the same version prints as of doubtful authority, not only the story of the woman taken in adultery (found in St. John's Gospel), but even the last twelve verses of the Gospel of St. Mark, the spuriousness of which, if proved, would destroy the earliest evangelistic evidence as to the Resurrection of Christ." This quotation is not from Bob Ingersoll, but from Rev. Dr. Abbott.

Modern scholars bring forward very plausible evidences to prove that Christianity is not an original religion at all, but an adaptation of Buddhism. Is it possible that our learned preachers believe this, and therefore have lost some of their old earnestness? Buddhism is religion without God, just as Comptism is Christianity without Christ. Travellers say that there is a startling difference in the popular appreciation of Buddhism and Christianity. The former is universally accepted, say, in Burmah, while the daily life and conduct of statesmen, priests and people alike deny the latter in Europe and America; that while Christianity is loudly proclaimed by its professors to be the only saving faith, and its missionaries are sent to preach its mysterious dogmas to the uttermost parts of the earth, on the majority of Englishmen, it exercises no influence. "The mass of the working classes ignore it altogether, and the middle class, among whom it has the firmest and deepest root, do not seem under its teaching to grow less material."

It would be unkind and unfair to charge that our ministers preach what they do not believe, but their lessons often lack explicitness. A wicked man dies, and his wicked friends follow him to the grave. A preacher is on hand, and the lesson is read about committing the body of our dear departed brother to the grave in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection. All the old chums of the deceased know that he never earned admission to the joys of heaven, either by his faith or his works. They are pleased to hear the preacher "check him through," but they go away talking about how much money the dead man left for his family, and not about the destination of his soul. These men, have not read either Paley's or Mowat's "Evidences of Christianity;" they never enter a church except to help bury a friend, and on such occasions they are not plainly taught that a man must behave

well in this world or pay the penalty in the next.

We are aware that in writing thus we may be treading upon dangerous ground but we mean it for the best. It may help the Ministerial Association to arrive at a correct conclusion on this subject of their choice, to know what laymen—or sinners—scribes, or even Pharisees—think about it. Women are believed to be the mainstay of the churches. They are more regular in attendance, more devout, more charitable, more self-sacrificing, more correct in their conduct, than men. Yet a woman wrote the following:

Theology and the Army are both dying professions. I do not mean to indicate that I think either will be dead in my time, but they are on the down grade, looked at from a sociological point of view. Training men for a life of battle—to learn how to kill each other—the fastest and easiest—is surely of the past. The days of warfare, let us hope, are numbered. Just in proportion as we are civilized, we will not fight—and we are steadily approaching civilization. That is why I say to Albert, "Do not be a professional soldier. Don't join a dying profession. Take one on the up grade. Take one that you will have to hurry to keep up with. Don't choose one that you must needs loiter behind, and hold back if you stay on speaking terms with it." That is what I said to him about the Army.

Now as to his more recent notion—Theology. Here are exactly the same objections. War and Theology belong to the same age. They belong to the infancy of the race. The former is civilized by progress to the extent of galling guns and torpedo boats; the latter to the verge of sailing hell over, and reading the vicarious statement and original sin out of good society. But in the nature of things, Theology must get its light from the past. It is based on a revelation long since closed. It cannot say, "We expect to revise this until it fits our needs"—as in law, or medicine, or journalism. The religious law—revelation—is sealed. A clergyman who is honest must go to the records of the dead past for his light, his inspiration, his guidance. The final appeal of any orthodox clergyman must be the Bible. He cannot doubt the justice of Jehovah, and be an orthodox clergyman. He cannot question the goodness of the Jewish God, and be true to his ordination vows. He cannot throw over what may shock or pain him in the New Testament; he cannot maintain his mental integrity in discussing the miracles, and be an orthodox minister. In short, father, if Albert ever outgrows the creed of a dead age, he will either have to sunder his manhood and his mental integrity, or he will have to throw over his profession—one or the other. Every one knows how hard this last is for a minister to do. It means a loss, a struggle, a painful break with many years of his life, with many loved and loving friends, and—often it means a vast deal more than that to a man so unhappily placed.

Why, father, while people talk so much of the clergy doing good to their fellows, living for them and to save them, the honorable, progressive physician is actually, quietly doing it. If there is a heaven, and crippled souls go there, surely, surely, there will be a Great Physician able to heal them—if He made them.

It is here that sorrow, suffering and pain need looking after. Man's highest duty is here. Do you know it is always an absurd idea to me that people who really believe in a personal God—and don't simply pretend to—seem to think that the Almighty made a mistake in locating them? He put them here. It seems to me that is a pretty strong hint that right here is the place where their energies are needed. If He had wanted them to look after some other world, don't you think He would have put them nearer their post of duty? But it is so much easier to sit in a study and pore over some far-off place and time than it is to take up the duties that are plain, and common, and tedious, right here and now. In short, father, it seems to me that if a man is a good healer of bodies, he is in a far nobler business than if he is a talker about souls.

No, father, do not let him commit himself, in his youth, to any calling which will bully him if he changes his mind, and hound him if he makes his changes known.

Many good women will dissent from these views. Many of them, we know, if the choice were left to them, would gladly see their brothers and sons in the pulpit. But all of them would grieve to see the friend in the pulpit have to coax people to come and listen to him. What is lacking to make the Gospel message awaken popular interest?

#### A Fiendish Husband.

A Dublin cable says: At Magherafelt, Tyrone, yesterday, a farmer who had not been on good terms with his wife attempted to kill her. He broke a hole in the ice and, dragging the woman to the spot, plunged her head foremost into the icy water, her feet alone being visible, keeping her submerged until she was almost drowned. When rescued by some farm hands the victim was insensible and stiff with cold. After being taken to her home under skillful treatment she was restored to life. A short time after regaining consciousness she gave birth to a still-born child. The woman is in a critical condition. Her brutal husband was arrested and narrowly escaped death at the hands of his enraged neighbors.

M. Floquet has been re-elected President of the French Chamber of Deputies, receiving 282 out of 333 votes cast.

The weather has been so phenomenally mild in Southern Alberta that in sheltered places trees are budding into leaf.

There are rumors in London that Sir George Stephen and Sir Donald Smith are interested in the reconstructed Baring firm.

A crowd of about 500 Russian Hebrews, men, women and children, have landed at Dover with the intention of emigrating to the United States.

An eminent German has been counting the number of hairs in human heads of differing colors. In a blonde one he found 140,400, in a brown 109,440, in a black 102,962, and in a red one 88,740.

A private despatch from Santiago states that the Chilean naval forces have started a revolution.

### NATURAL GAS PERILS.

A Hotel Wrecked, Several Persons Killed and Many Wounded

A Findlay, O., despatch says: The first great disaster Findlay has ever experienced from the use of natural gas occurred shortly before noon to-day. While the guests of the Hotel Marvin were waiting to be summoned to dinner, it was discovered that gas was escaping from a leak somewhere into the dining-room. Mr. Marvin, the owner of the building, with three plumbers, spent the entire forenoon trying to locate the leak. About 10 o'clock they entered a chamber under the dining-room and found such an accumulation of gas that they could not breathe, and it was suggested that a hole be sawed through the floor into the dining-room in order to obtain fresh air. This was done, and just as the hole was made one of the dining-room girls, who was sweeping the floor, stepped upon a match, and in an instant an explosion occurred which not only wrecked the building, but killed two girls and maimed and injured a dozen other employees. The force of the explosion was so great that it blew out the flame of the ignited gas, and no fire followed the awful ruin which the shock caused. The whole city was shaken by the concussion, and all the windows on the square were demolished, while the wreck of the hotel building was all but complete. The only rooms in the house escaping destruction were the parlors and the office. Had the explosion occurred ten minutes later the loss of life would have been frightful, as nearly a hundred people were waiting in the rooms to be called to dinner. When the work of removing the dead and rescuing the dying was begun, it was found that Katie Walters, a waitress, had been killed outright; Ella Johnson, a dining-room girl, was found alive under a mass of brick and mortar, but she died shortly afterward; Kate Rooney, another dining-room girl, was also fatally injured, but is still alive; Frank Poundstone, day clerk, painfully bruised and cut about the neck and face, but he will recover; Anson Marvill, owner of the building, who was with the plumbers under the dining-room floor when the explosion occurred, was probably fatally injured, as a great deal of the flame from the gas was inhaled; Albert French, porter of the hotel, seriously but not fatally hurt; Frank Andrews, one of the proprietors, had his right eye knocked out and is badly bruised. The three plumbers were painfully hurt, but not seriously. The loss is about \$35,000, covered by insurance.

#### A Big Land Slide.

A Tacoma despatch says: A disastrous landslide occurred on the line of the Northern Pacific last night at Palmer's, 43 miles from this city. A mountain of earth and dirt now covers the tracks of the road for a distance of over 300 yards, and travel has been completely shut off. The road-bed of the line in the vicinity of the accident is practically laid on the side of a huge bluff. On Friday night the rain made inroads upon the bank, and two hours before midnight hundreds of tons of earth and rock fell upon the road-bed. For a distance of over 900 feet along the tracks the fallen earth averages a depth of 10 feet. There is no way to build around the slide and passengers are transferred.

#### Four Men Dashed to Death.

A Troy, N. Y., despatch says: Yesterday morning a terrible accident occurred at Split Rock quarry, six miles north of Westport, on Lake Champlain, four men being killed outright and two so badly injured that they may die. A loaded car on the tramway used in lowering the granite to the lake started down the steep incline. For some reason the man at the brake left his post, and the car dashed down the grade at frightful speed. The car crashed into a group of persons consisting of the two sons of Supt. Robertson, aged 12 and 17 years, the engineer and three quarrymen. Both the Robertson boys, the engineer and one quarryman were instantly killed.

#### Severe Self-Judgment.

Toronto Grip: Quickflash, sen. (to his son)—Don't you think you could make yourself useful by cleaning off this snow? Quickflash, jun.—Aw—rather queer job, don't you think, for the son of a gentleman?

Quickflash, sen. (exploding)—Son of a jackass, you mean!

#### Cold Comfort.

New York Weekly: Mrs. De Sette (musingly)—Three of the girls I went to school with have eloped from their husbands.

Mr. De Sette (suspiciously)—Hum Perhaps you would like to be the fourth. Mrs. De Sette (assuredly)—Oh, no, I couldn't leave the children.

#### Quite an Item.

Fuck: Closest (to wholesale manager)—Have you made up the list of things in our line affected by the tariff? Manager—Yes, sir; everything, save one item, has risen enormously. Closest—And what item is that? Manager—Salaries!

#### Excusable.

Rochester Herald: A man in Philadelphia was singing a song about Parnell the other night when an Irishman present hit the singer on the head and fractured his skull. Such a result is most deplorable, but then some men are very poor singers.

#### That's So.

New York Herald: Once in a while politician complains because the newspapers tell lies about him. It would be very rough, though, if the newspapers were to mend their ways and tell the truth about them.

#### The Silver Question.

New York Herald: "Have you got a quarter about you, old fel, that you don't have to have?"

#### Logical.

Washington Post: Brown—I can marry any girl I please. Van Riper—There's the rub; you don't please any.

If riches have wings, the Mount Carmel air-ship (capital \$20,000,000) ought to see like a lark.

An English syndicate will buy out the manufacturers of spools, bobbins and shuttles in the States.

### A NAUGHTY PARSON

Who has Probably Added Murder to his Other Offences.

An Albany, N. Y., despatch says: The Rev. A. W. George is pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church at Leeds, three miles from Catskill, going there from New Jersey about three weeks ago. On Friday evening Coroner Kertz was notified that Lotta Townsend, of that place, desired to make an ante-mortem statement. Miss Townsend is a more than ordinarily handsome girl, with a plump and well-rounded figure. She was 20 years old last July. She stated that about the first of September she entered the George family, which consisted of the minister and his wife, as an adopted daughter. Her mother is dead, and her father lives at Fishkill. Shortly after Miss Townsend entered into the family Mrs. George went west to visit relatives, and has not returned. One Sunday night in September, and at various times after this, she consented to his propositions. Later she informed George of her condition, and he took her to Dr. Erway's office here on three different occasions. Operations were performed on her with instruments. Her condition became alarming, and the corner was notified and took her ante-mortem statement. To-day he visited Leeds, and George made a confession corroborating the girl's statement. Warrants have been issued for the arrest of both George and Dr. Erway.

### THE IRISH DISTRESS.

Poverty-Stricken People Refused Aid by the Board of Guardians.

A Dublin cable says: It is stated that the poor people of the Provinces of Ulster, Connaught and Munster have reached the extreme limit of destitution. A despatch from Mitchelstown states that a crowd of poverty-stricken people called upon the Board of Guardians there, asking for relief. The board refused to do anything for the applicants, even refusing their assistance from the Zeiland-Balfour fund. A despatch from Castlebar, County Mayo, says the Government, as a measure of relief, has employed a thousand men about Westport in the construction of a railroad. The Board of Guardians of the same locality have given tenants in need of assistance 1,200 tons of seed potatoes. It is stated that Mr. Balfour's prompt action in relieving the poor in the west of Ireland has averted many deaths from starvation.

### The Chilean Revolution.

A telegram containing further news of the rebellion in Chili has just been received in London by way of Buenos Ayres. It says a number of the naval rebels had disembarked at Coquimbo, and the troops were trying to surround the insurgents and isolate them from loyal districts. The despatch adds that President Balmaceda has issued a manifesto energetically asserting his authority and refuting the insurgents' pretensions. The Chronicle urges the Government to strengthen the navy in the Pacific so as to guard the British subjects in Chili. The paper adds that nothing should be neglected while the difficulty with America and the trouble in the South exist.

### He Spoke Feelingly.

What was considered a very good joke by the professional men who heard it as a recent dinner in this city, where the reporters were conspicuous by their absence, has just leaked out. One of their number was responding to the toast of "The Ladies," and was treating the subject in a unique way. After paying the usual compliments to the softer sex, he said:

"I tell you, gentlemen, a great deal has been said and written about the women in all ages, but I am going to touch an important branch of the subject by speaking of the mother-in-law—"

Just then one of the gentlemen interrupted the speaker with, "But how is it if a man has two?"

"Ah, how feelingly you speak!" was the happy rejoinder, all the more happy from the fact that the interrupter is blessed with a brace of healthy mothers-in-law who make his home a paradise.

### A Palace on Fire.

A Paris cable says: The palace at Rouen is on fire. At last accounts a portion of the roof, 40 yards in circumference, was in a blaze. The flames were extending downward despite the efforts of the firemen. It seems probable the building, which is widely noted for its architectural beauty, will be destroyed. The fire was finally quenched. The damage was confined to the upper portion of the structure. The older and more valuable wing was saved entire.

### The "Black Death" in Russia.

A despatch from Tobolsk says the terrible scourge known as "black death" has reached the City of Tobolsk, the capital of West Siberia. The whole of Asiatic Russia from Samarkand to the mouth of the Obi is suffering from the scourge. Thousands are dying at Otdorsk, near the mouth of the Obi. Owing to the lack of physicians, it seems almost hopeless to try and check the spread of the fearful disease.

### The Sole Condition.

Life: "Gentlemen," said the Governor, who had been petitioned to extend executive clemency to a prisoner convicted of poisoning her husband, "I will pardon this woman, but only on one condition."

"And that is—?"

"That she shall not go on the stage."

### FROZEN TO DEATH.

Indian Pupils Desert School and Perish in the Snowdrifts.

A Kingfisher, O. T., despatch says: There is trouble at the Kiowa Indian school at Anadoko, Wichita Agency. On the 9th inst. the principal of the school punished a Kiowa pupil for misconduct. The boy persuaded two other Indian pupils to run away from school with him. Their absence was noticed that evening, but the principal supposed the boys had merely gone to the camp of their parents, two miles away. On Saturday the teacher went in pursuit of the truants, but they were not found. Their parents were notified, and their Indian friends started in search of them. The lads were found on Sunday all frozen to death, one, 10 years of age, being twenty miles from school. The others, three or four years older, were found within the next ten miles. It is supposed the boys lost their way in a heavy snow storm. When the principal learned of the boys' fate, fearing the vengeance of the Indians, he fled, and has not since been heard from. A report was brought here to-day that 400 or 500 angry Indians are camped near the agency, and threaten to burn the school building and to kill the principal if he can be found. An application has been made to the commanding officer at Fort Sill for troops to prevent any outbreak.

### AN AMBASSADOR'S SUICIDE.

The Turkish Envoy to Austria Tries to End an Unhappy Life.

A Vienna cable says: It was announced here yesterday that Sadullah Pasha, the Turkish Ambassador to Austria, was suffering from a fit. It now transpires that he attempted suicide in his bathroom. It is said he tried to strangle himself, and failed in this, attempted to end his life by stopping up all the apertures in the room and allowing the gas in the burners to escape. He was discovered before life was extinct, and doctors hastily summoned. They worked over him for a long time and at length succeeded in restoring respiration, but were unable to bring the patient back to consciousness, although every means known to science is being employed. It is thought the ambassador will probably die. The Ambassador's attempt to commit suicide is believed to be due to family troubles, as his wife is suffering from an incurable disease, and his favorite daughter has become insane.

### The Perfection of Politeness.

A writer in the New York Star narrates an instance of what he terms the perfection of politeness. A little girl had upset a glass of water at table in presence of company, and her eyes filled with tears. Instantly the host upset his own glass with a crash that drew the gaze of all, to the infinite relief of the childish guest, and peace was happily restored. The incident was pretty, and the sympathetic thoughtfulness which it revealed was beyond all commendation.

### Always Acceptable.

Buffalo News: "Stop, Charlie, don't ask me. I've always regarded you as a good joke, that all," said the fair maiden. "Well, I tell you what," returned Charlie, "you'd better snap me right up. Good jokes are hard to find nowadays."

### John was Able.

New Haven News: An Apt Pupil.—Mrs. Youngblood—Now that it is the new year, John, I hope that you will be able to say no; and by the way, won't you let me have a little money? John (heroically)—No.

### D. C. N. L. 5,91

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