

We suspect, however, that there is another cause for the malady of which religious teachers complain, one equally applicable to Protestantism and modern Judaism. In former ages, when people deemed it a duty to join in common worship and consecrate certain days and hours for that purpose, they did so because they acknowledged the authority of the Creator and their obligations to Him. They also revered their teachers as expounders of His word and as His messengers. In those times to go to church was to approach a sanctuary and for the time belong to draw near the Almighty. Nor was this originally a delusion. The ancient temple was in fact the Father's House; the synagogues were auxiliaries to the sacred precincts and the first gathering places of primitive Christians were still permeated by the Spirit that filled the Church on the ever memorable day of Pentecost. Long after the temple had been destroyed and the Spirit all but withdrawn, the impression prevailed among the people and they still gathered in the same spirit as their fathers had done.

The change came with the discovery that the modern synagogues and churches no longer are what their prototypes were. Religious teachers have driven the congregations away by loudly declaring that there is no longer any inspiration, no revelation from God. For if that is true, as it unquestionably is as far as they are concerned, the logical deduction is that the church is no more than a common hall and the priest not above the common orator. When church-going has lost the character once stamped upon it by God himself, it can be no more than any other means of improvement and amusement, and if it is the loser in the competition to which it has been lowered, the reasons are plain enough. Religion is a great factor in the world, but only to the extent that it retains the divine element which is its essence and its power. An imitation, however skillfully made, is worthless.

There is no remedy for the fin de siècle malady but a revival, such as that which created the Mosiac dispensation under the inspired leadership of Moses, or the Christian era by the appearance on earth of the Son of God.

INCREASING THE TAX BURDEN.

The action of the Salt Lake county commissioners in deciding to fund the outstanding indebtedness of the county by an issue of \$350,000 bonds means a direct increase of the tax burden upon the property owners in the county. This fact is not averted by the claim that the warrants now bear eight per cent interest, while the bonds will bear only five per cent. An economical administration of county affairs might pay the warrants within ten years time, at the most, while the first payment on the bonds cannot be made until after that period.

Taking the figures of the case on a decent administration of Salt Lake county matters for the next ten years, and the present indebtedness could be paid off at the rate of \$35,000 with its accrued interest, each year. This would make the aggregate interest for ten years on the warrants \$140,000; a

total debt to be paid of \$490,000. By the issue of bonds as ordered the interest for the ten years before a dollar of the principal can be paid is \$175,000—a total of \$525,000, to which must be added an aggregate average for the second ten years of \$87,500 interest, or a grand total of debt to be met of \$612,500. This shows a loss to the taxpayers in twenty years of \$182,500—an average of \$6,825 a year. The only assumption on which a showing in favor of the proposed bonds can be made is that if not issued the county administration will be so extravagant that the warrants will not be paid in the time stated.

One trouble is that the bonds now ordered must be paid in a certain way, which means an immediate and increased taxation. The county now taxes as high as it dares to under existing circumstances. When the proposed bonds are issued, the state law makes it imperative to levy an additional tax to pay the interest. This will be \$17,500 per year for ten years. Then, commencing with the eleventh year, there is an additional levy of \$35,000 per year; the entire amount then must be paid within ten years. There must be five per cent interest for ten years and an average of two and a half per cent for another ten; while the warrants could be paid with an average interest of four per cent for ten years with no greater burden on the county than the other way, and a saving of \$132,500.

Then there is the rate per cent. Upon the specious plea that the bonds are made payable in "lawful money" of the United States instead of "gold," an interest of one per cent is added. This is an elegant method of convincing the people of the superiority of the gold standard—\$35,000 in ten yearly payments and half that amount for the succeeding ten years, to educate them to the fact that "lawful money" is more expensive to them than gold. The truth of the matter is that the added one per cent is robbing the people of just so much, on a plea that is violative of the financial sentiment which exists here. "Lawful money" is as good to Salt Lake county in paying its debts as "gold," and as a matter of principle there should be no distinction. Besides, it would be as easy to sell four per cent as five per cent bonds; the State gets its money at four per cent. The financial policy of this government is not such as to depreciate its "lawful money" and appreciate its gold coin, however untrue it may be in restricting its money issue. This whole procedure by the county commissioners is one that ought to be revised or more thoroughly explained, and promptly, too.

THE CITY COUNCIL.

The City Council had several interesting items before it at the Tuesday evening session. One was in relation to street sprinkling. There was the subject of how the work was being done, and if we are to accept the words of some of the councilmen there is no inclination on the part of the contractor to neglect his job. Because of this, it was suggested that a city official ought to supervise the sprinkling, and see

that the contract is properly kept. To "a man up a tree" it would appear to be the square thing that if the municipality has to pay an official to trail after and specially watch a contractor doing his work, the cost should be deducted from the contract price. The suggestion that the sprinkling contractor needs to be under surveillance is an imputation upon the honesty and integrity of the contractor, made by the councillors who offer the suggestion, and needs an explanation.

Then again there is the cost of street sprinkling. A contract was let on a basis of sprinkling for twelve months in the year, although everybody knows there are several months when the performance is unnecessary. But for the present it may be regarded that the bid on the twelve-month basis was lower than any other offered, for the actual time of sprinkling. Now comes the addition of new streets, which makes the cost higher than any previous year. Taking it as a whole the city is getting no better service, but pays more for it. Some places that do not need sprinkling get it, and others which need it are missed. That is not the contractor's fault. The blame lies on the officials who got bids for an unlawful "sprinkling district," instead of getting a contract for a given quantity with liberty to make transfers and changes which would improve the service without adding a burden to the contractor or the city treasury.

There was also the complaint against Street Supervisor Mulloy. Some councilmen seem to think him too lazy to attend to his duties. If he is, there ought to be a removal, quick; if he is not, then there should be some apology for the insinuations against him. The people will not approve the holding in office of a discredited official. Further, a councilman charged the street supervisor with being uncivil in his official communications. The charge, if not refuted or withdrawn, is enough to cause the removal of any officer. Official boorishness or tyranny is not a qualification which the public wants to pay a salary for. Mr. Mulloy ought to be vindicated, or retired.

Then there was the representation made by Mrs. Paddock concerning children being allowed in saloons, and the dangers consequent thereupon. Doubtless the lady is firmly convinced that she can establish the truth of her assertions; and if she can, then the condition is a disgrace to the city, either in the insufficiency of the regulations or of their enforcement. All the ill Mrs. Paddock recites, and more too, come from allowing this practice. If a change in the administration of municipal affairs in this line is not in the immediate view of the official incumbents, then a change to those officials is next in order.

The trend of the whole City Council session shows the urgent need for a reformation in municipal administration. If the present City Council is equal to the task, it cannot be too speedy in manifesting that fact. The people are willing to give them a chance, but are not willing to submit for too long a time to a laxity in municipal matters that amounts almost to criminal neglect of the duty of officials to the public.