

**THE DECAY OF
CHURCHES, A
SPIRITUAL OUTLOOK**

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The Decay of Churches, a Spiritual Outlook by Decay

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DECAY

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A SPIRITUAL OUTLOOK.

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world,"
"Morte d'Arthur."



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P R E F A C E .

IN undertaking to call attention to the fact—so often denied—that a condition of spiritual decay has set in, which, it is to be feared, is already producing deplorable results, I have been impelled to write by a sense of moral obligation, the force of which it might be difficult to make others understand.

Having myself arrived at a time of life when a somewhat busy existence is drawing to a close; when 'the clouds return after the rain;' when 'the silver cord' is loosening, and 'the golden bowl' is about to be broken, I might well leave to others a task which is ill suited to advanced age and impaired health.

For this, and for other reasons, I should certainly have been silent, but for the strange insensibility that seems to have come over us with

respect to a state of things which I cannot but regard as involving "the most important of all living issues."

If, as we have recently been told, "we have come to the brink of great intellectual as well as spiritual change;" and if, indeed, we have reason to believe that "much of the frivolous reading of the present day will, before long, be supplanted by a thoughtful and austere literature, vivified by endangered interests, and made fervid by ecclesiastical passion," it is high time to awake from slumber, and to prepare for whatever, in the providence of God, is likely to befall us.

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