

yer have reasonable ground for disquietude if he happened to know of the junket? Not that such junkets imply incidental corruption. They do not—not necessarily. But they do imply a degree of comradeship which may not be without sinister tendencies when judicial discretion is invoked.

DEGENERACY OF OUR ORGANIZED CHRISTIANITY.

In Froude's most excellent sketch of Julius Caesar there is a description of the state of the decaying religion of Rome before the Christian era, which is marvelously suggestive of the state of the organized Christianity of to-day. Froude writes:

Religion, once the foundation of the laws and rule of personal conduct, had subsided, into opinion. The educated, in their hearts, disbelieved it. Temples were still built with increasing splendor; the established forms were scrupulously observed. Public men spoke conventionally of Providence, that they might throw on their opponents the odium of impiety; but of genuine belief that life had any serious meaning, there was none remaining beyond the circle of the silent, patient, ignorant multitude. The whole spiritual atmosphere was saturated with cant—cant moral, cant political, cant religious; an affectation of high principle which had ceased to touch the conduct, and flowed on in an increasing volume of insincere and unreal speech.

Is not all this as true of American Christianity in Roosevelt's time as it was of the religion of ancient Rome in Caesar's?

By "religion" we allude, of course, not to the all-abounding spiritual principle which is from everlasting unto everlasting; but to the organic forms in which it is garbed, and the ministers in the mass who represent it.

As Froude observes concerning the dying religion of Rome, there was a surviving "circle of the silent, patient, ignorant multitude," among whom there still flourished a "genuine belief that life had" a "serious meaning." And doubtless this multitude was spiritually served by faithful ones who still believed that the old forms were vital with spiritual purpose, who affected nothing, and whose volume of speech was neither insin-

cere nor unreal. So it is here and in our day.

We have a simple multitude, not ignorant in the sense of being unlettered, but densely ignorant of the religious, social, political and financial forces that are in play all about them; and this multitude, silent, patient, simple and sincere, is spiritually served by many devoted ministers and priests. But how is it with our organized church as a social force? Is this making for social righteousness, as the unsophisticated patiently trust, and their devoted servitors sincerely assure them? Does it not rather respond to the subtle touch of business classes that affect principles which have ceased to govern their conduct, and follow in the wake of unscrupulous financiers and subservient newspapers, all saturated with moral, political and religious cant?

Of religion as represented by the organized Christianity of to-day may we not slightly paraphrase Froude and say:

Religion, once the foundation of our laws and rule of personal conduct, has subsided into paganism on the one hand and hypocrisy on the other. The sophisticated in their hearts disbelieve it. Churches are still built with increasing splendor; the established forms are scrupulously observed. Public men and newspapers speak conventionally of Christianity, that they may throw on those who do not, the odium of impiety; but of genuine belief that life has a Christian meaning, there is none remaining beyond the circle of the silent, patient, unsophisticated multitude. The whole churchly atmosphere is saturated with cant—cant moral, cant political, cant religious,—an affectation of high moral and spiritual principle which has ceased to touch commercial, industrial, political and ecclesiastical conduct, and flows on in an increasing volume of insincere and unreal speech.

When the question of property in human flesh and blood was at issue in this country, the churches stood for vested property rights and against natural human rights. Not merely did they silently acquiesce in the one, as with all propriety they might, but they preached against the other. Professing to represent the Fatherhood of God and the consequent brotherhood of man, they minimized the Christian texts which enjoin love of the neighbor, while they emphasized the Paulist text

which commands obedience to masters. Why? Because the privileged property interests of the time commanded the agencies of organized religion.

Not until fratricidal war resulted, did the churches take part in the slavery question; and then their part in it was only incidental to their deeper interest in the war—those on one side of a geographical line being incidentally for slavery; those on the other being incidentally against it; those on each being primarily concerned with winning the war for its own section.

Professed advocates of the brotherhood of man, they had been defenders of human slavery; institutional representatives of the Prince of Peace, they became sectional partisans for war.

So it was again when the British across the ocean and the American republic here, embarked upon careers of conquest by war. The organized church did not oppose; it did not even hold aloof. It applauded these movements and assumed to sanctify their invasive, domineering, and bloody purpose, with the approval of a religion the very essence of which is love and its professions peace. Why? Because business interests demanded it. Organized Christianity, like the organized piety of the Rome of Caesar, had become paganized at the extremities and commercialized at the heart.

Consider the reign of oppressive privilege, to which a disinherited world is awaking and against which it revolts. What part is organized Christianity taking in this great drama? Does it speak for the despoiled? Not as a body; not through the leaders; and only here and there through any of its ministers. Does it admonish the despoiler? Not so long as he keeps out of jail, avoids personal scandal, abstains from petty gambling, and does his drinking at a wealthy club instead of a cheap saloon. Does it even hold its peace, preaching abstract religious doctrines and leaving concrete communal problems to the individual conscience? No, not even this does it do. The agents of organized Christianity are so completely at the service of the privileged classes, who in their hearts disbelieve it yet erect its temples and observe its forms, that these

classes have only to say "Come!" and this degenerate church comes; or "Go!" and it goes.

When labor organizations strike, the pulpit thunders; but, with only here and there an exception, its thunderbolts are leveled at the organized men whose struggle is for a bare living for hard work. Seldom are they leveled at the organized manipulators of oppressive privilege, whose struggle is to get something for nothing.

Against labor strikers the pulpit is seldom slow to thunder its anathemas. But how many pulpits have thundered against the wholesale sacrifice of children in factories and mines for the enrichment of men who contribute temples and observe forms? How many pulpits have thundered against grabbing public highways, by millionaires toward whom their occupants turn for financial encouragement? How many pulpits have thundered against the private appropriation of God's common bounties by builders of temples and observers of forms, who have thereby impoverished their brethren? How many pulpits have thundered against institutions that enrich some by impoverishing and degrading others?

That some pulpits have done and are doing all this is true, but they are exceptions,—noble instances, but rare exceptions.

As an institution the pulpit, and as a class the clergy, are allies of despoiling privilege. While they are more or less active against superficial communal evils of the disreputable sort, mere surface manifestations of deep seated and hoary communal wrongs, and are occasionally very active in this regard, they are never cooperatively active against the wrongs which produce those manifestations.

At the present time there are two cities in the United States in which the privileged owners of street car franchises realize that their privileges are slipping away from them. The people are demanding their own. Nothing could be more acceptable to the beneficiaries of these valuable privileges, at such a time, than some temporary public excitement over other questions. And curi-

ously enough, precisely that boon is being furnished by most of the ministers in those two cities, and only there.

In Cleveland, where Mayor Johnson's long contest with the street car ring is coming to a successful issue, a body of ministers is demanding that Mayor Johnson enforce a Sabbatarian law against orderly saloons. They raise no question of disorder; disorderly saloons are suppressed. They raise no fair question of law enforcement; Mayor Johnson is enforcing the law rationally and invites their cooperation. The only real question they raise is whether he shall enforce it in his own rational way, which is proving progressively effective, or in their spectacular way, which has always and everywhere proved futile. He is proceeding along the line of least resistance; they demand that he proceed along that of greatest resistance. And this at a time when the street car ring needs something to baffle him with!

In Chicago, where Mayor Dunne's contest with the street car ring is at a critical point, a similar anti-saloon crusade has been started; and as this has fallen rather flat, it has been supplemented by a general church crusade for an increase of saloon licenses. And what is especially significant, the unconcealed object of the increase is not to suppress or regulate the liquor traffic, but to get a greater public revenue out of it. With a city full of rich privilege-owning tax dodgers, the pulpit is silent about the tax dodgers, but goes on a crusade to raise further revenues from the liquor traffic by a method which does not excite the opposition of the large manufacturers, and which it is conceded will not curtail their trade! And this at a time when the street car interests, many of the beneficiaries of which are builders of temples and observers of forms, are desperately in need of something to divert public attention from their plundering purpose.

In this connection, and as a further indication of the moral degeneracy of the pulpit as an institution, it is to be noted that the Cleveland ministers, in replying to Mayor Johnson's fair-minded letter (p. 733), not only demanded that he adopt their own specu-

lar but futile method of enforcing their Sabbatarian law, but brushed aside as "academic" his invitation to join him not alone in suppressing vice and crime, but in abolishing the legal privileges which, by robbing the many to enrich the few, constitute the primary causes of most vice and crime.

Think of a body of professed followers of the Carpenter of Nazareth brushing aside a suggestion to cooperate with an efficient public official in abolishing un-Christian privileges, and brushing it aside because the suggestion is "academic"!

Testimony might be piled mountain high, to show that the Christian pulpit as an institution has come to be what Roman paganism was in Caesar's time as Froude describes it. It is a living and pliant tool which beneficiaries of privilege manipulate, a sort of moral policeman whose functions beneficiaries of privilege utilize to shield their own big crimes by assailing the petty vices of other people.

But this does not mean necessarily that such is to be the history of the pulpit for long. Not only are masses of men, Christian in spirit if not in form, finding outside of organized churches better spiritual food than is commonly dispensed within them, but within the organized churches themselves there are indications of an eruption, a genuine spiritual awakening, a hopeful moral revolution. It is not impossible, nor even improbable, that soon the money changers in the temple may come again under the lash, and that the Christian pulpit may have a rebirth and resume its original mission of proclaiming the universal Fatherhood of God and equal brotherhood of men.

NEWS NARRATIVE

How to use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives: Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before; continue so until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginnings to date.

Week ending Thursday, Feb. 8.

The impending coal strike.

A stupendous labor strike is