

book, "Wealth Versus Commonwealth." was reviewed and discussed. The ministers, one and all, expressed complete sympathy with Mr. Lloyd's indictment of the Standard Oil company. But they were almost as unanimous in the opinion that a preacher ought not to jeopardize the peace of his congregation by treating such subjects in the pulpit.

Now consider the memorial of the New England preachers in objecting to taking this money on the ground that the methods of the Standard Oil company are "morally iniquitous and socially destructive." and in refusing to be put "in a relation implying honor toward the donor."

While this is gratifying as evidence of the increasing interest that good people are taking in social problems, it leaves much to be desired. This is not wholly an individual problem, and we do not reach the root of the matter by pointing a finger of scorn at particular individuals. Primarily it is a question of wise or unwise social arrangements. The remedy is to be found in social readjustments, not in personal denunciation.

All know that the inordinate power of the Standard Oil company has been built up, very largely, by discrimination in railroad rates. It is not enough that the church should denounce as bad the men who have profited by such discrimination. It is more important to teach people the need of taking the railroads out of private hands, that passenger and freight rates may be as impartial as the price of postage stamps.

Mr. Rockefeller is not more a knave than the other fellows have been fools. If the rest of us had given more thought to public questions we would have owned our own railroads, and he could not then have done all this wickedness. Would it not be more Christian for us to repent of our neglect, than to declare from the house-tops our scorn of him?

To denounce this one man is to misdirect the thought of the people. Attention should be turned to the bad social arrangements which furnish so many opportunities for injustice and rapacity.

Surely the people who have done and are doing nothing to correct these conditions, cannot escape their share of the guilt. Their indictment does not carry the weight it should, because they do not come into court with clean hands. Others have been guilty of sins of commission. We have sinned grievously by our political prejudices and our mental sloth and neglect of civic duties.

If the good people of this country had had the intelligence and the public spirit which a citizen of the great Republic ought to have a Rockefeller would be an impossibility. Therefore, repentance is more in order than censure.

The church that faces these social

problems intelligently and courageously will not need to reject Standard Oil money. It will not be offered any.

NORWAY AND SWEDEN.

For The Public.

So much excitement prevails throughout the civilized world over the Russo-Japanese war and the disturbances in Russia itself, that little is heard concerning the less sanguinary but very momentous upheaval in Norway. The Union question—Unionsagen—is not a new one, but recent events have caused it to assume greater proportions than ever before.

In order to understand the situation it is well to recall that from the Middle Ages until 1814 Norway and Denmark were united. At this date (1814), Denmark being involved in wars, the national feeling already existing in Norway augmented and she freed herself, formed a constitution and became a republic. But during the ensuing year Sweden lost Finland to Russia and bethought herself of the danger from antagonists on each frontier and of the benefits likely to accrue from an alliance with Norway. Negotiations followed and treaties were drawn up between Sweden and Denmark, to the end that Norway should be compelled to unite with Sweden. But Norway refused to recognize a treaty that should dispose of an entire country without the consent of that country herself, and war was the consequence.

But in time a conference was held between the National Assembly in Norway and the Rigsdag in Stockholm, at which an agreement was reached as to the new constitution and the conditions upon which the king should be recognized in Norway. Then, and not till then, did she proclaim Carl Johan as King Carl XIII. of Norway and Sweden. This proclamation was issued "in terms that intimated that the new king based his rights upon the spontaneous and unanimous choice of the Norwegian people, and not upon any previous treaties in which the Norwegians themselves had had no part."

Under this new agreement Norway became "a free, independent, indivisible and inalienable kingdom, united with Sweden under one king."

"The constitutions of the two countries, each of which rests upon its own fundamental laws, differ greatly from one another in a number of important points."

"The ordinary legislation of the two countries is wholly distinct, and in principles it is, in many respects, fundamentally different."

All important state institutions are separate; ministry and government offices, courts of justice, customs and finances.

This in brief is the relation of the two countries to each other; the king spends a small part of each year in Christiania, and is the nominal head of the government, although it can readily be seen that the Norwegian Storting is a highly independent body and conducts the affairs of the kingdom very much to its own liking. The bond has never been very close and its strength has been severely tested upon several occasions.

The great point at issue has been the matter of foreign representation—Konsulatsagen. Norway has felt the justice of being represented abroad by her own men, but this has never been granted. It is easy to see that it requires a man of exceptional nobility and a strong sense of justice to represent the interests of the two countries, even though those countries be ruled by one king. They may have one sovereign, but they are not one people. Involuntary fraternity is a very weak tie and one must expect something less than complete harmony.

The matter of separation has been often discussed in Norway, but it has always been opposed by Sweden, and even in her own Storting has had its strong opponents. The Norwegian people, although eminently peace-loving, are such extreme individualists that it is difficult for them to unite on matters of great moment. But a new impetus has been given to the question, and Norway has combined at last against her neighbor.

The king has abdicated in favor of his son, ostensibly on the plea of age and failing health, but it is believed that the prospect of dismemberment was one that he did not wish to face, preferring to leave it to younger men and minds. It would seem that Norway having entered into this union "voluntarily and spontaneously," could as readily dissolve the partnership. But this is not the case. The young prince is ambitious and would found a great Scandinavian empire; he would also have the strength of Norwegian arms in case of troubles from the Russian frontier, of which there is always a possibility.

But Norway, on the other hand, having so long virtually conducted her own affairs, feels herself quite capable of doing so entirely. In case of war she is thoroughly prepared, and, judging by her friendly relations with other European countries, is not likely to suffer

for allies. Her people are unusually independent and liberty-loving, and they wear the galling yoke under protest. The independent papers, chief among which is Verdens Gang, are full of the controversy from day to day. Norway is stirred from North Cape to Lindesnaes, and her men of thought are keenly alive to the affair. She does not possess the American politician type, so that the cause is espoused by Storthing men and authors and business men alike. Such men as Bjornson and Nansen are in the front rank and voice the popular opinion.

The latest development is an appointment of a committee to consider and shape the course of action, and it is sincerely to be hoped that the matter may be concluded peaceably, and that Norway may reach the "ultima thule" of national liberty.

MARY HEATH LEE.

THE AMERICAN CLERGY AND PLUTOCRACY.

Written for The Public by Rev. James B. Converse, of Morristown, Tenn., author of "Uncle Sam's Bible."

Can the American clergy be freed from the influence of wealth? from sympathy with the rich? from indifference about economic injustice and political corruption?

If they cannot be freed from these things the chasm between the church and the masses will widen and deepen.

We answer: Yes; all needed to deliver them is self-knowledge and the Holy Spirit. And we give three reasons for our answer.

First, the masses and not the monopolists support the clergy. The children's pennies keep up the Sunday schools; the nickels of the people pay the foreign missionaries, and their quarters support the pastors. Standard Oil may endow a university, but it does not pay the Baptist preachers.

Secondly, the masses also supply the hearers. The plutocrats are few, and their social amusements do not permit their regular attendance at church. The audiences must come from the masses.

Thirdly, there is much knowledge of the Bible, both among the laity and the clergy. Myriads of teachers' Bibles and millions of others are sold. No book competes with it in popularity. Thousands of papers publish expositions of the Sunday school lessons. Hundreds of ministers read the Hebrew Testament, and thousands the Greek Testament. The teachings of the Bible about plutocracy are plain and many. The Founder of our religion was a carpenter. Dur-

ing his public ministry he had no regular salary, but was supported by charity. He had no parsonage, not even a pillow. He preached that it was very hard for a rich man to be saved. His disciples continued his teachings. They went everywhere supported by charity or by their own labor. They taught that covetousness is idolatry, that the love of money is a root of all evil. In the laws which God published through Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, He ordained that all debts should be cancelled at the end of every seven years, and that at the jubilee every one should return to his own possession. Our condition differs widely from that of France at the time of the Revolution and from the condition of Russia at the present time. The French knew the mass and the Russians know their ikons. But we know the Bible, which is the great enemy of plutocracy.

All needed (we repeat) to free the American clergy from its false conservatism is self-knowledge and God's grace. The last our ministers know how to get.

The charge of sympathy with the rich and indifference towards economic injustice and political corruption will be resented. Please hear first, and strike afterwards if you wish.

In other lands the clergy have been and are very conservative. The daily papers give an illustration. The whole world sympathizes with the Russian people in their desire for liberty and admires Father Gapon, their leader. But the Holy Synod, unanimously, so far as appears, denounced him as a renegade priest. The Russian clergy would resent the charge that they are slaves to the autocracy, and would claim to be free. But are they free? Are they not in bondage? Wealth and not office, plutocracy and not autocracy, rules America. Where do our clergy stand?

Another illustration: The French Revolution. The church allied itself to the throne. But the priests did not regard themselves as the tools of tyranny. They thought themselves the defenders of religion, good order, learning and culture. In France the throne, the church and Christianity fell together. So general is our knowledge of Christ and His book that no such result is to be feared here. And yet, even here, clerical indifference to injustice and corruption does great harm to religion.

A third example: England before Wesley and Whitefield. Its laws were bloody and barbarous; but the established clergy did not protest. The populace was poor and brutal, but the clergy did not cure.

These three examples of clerical indifference come from three faiths—Greek, Romish and Protestant. Has human nature been changed by crossing the Atlantic?

The cause of this indifference is plain. Men belong first to their families; secondly, to their class; thirdly, to their nation; and only fourthly to mankind. John Smith is first of all a husband and father; next a merchant; thirdly, an American, and only fourthly, a man. After his family his interests center in his business. He sympathizes with his class more strongly than with his nation or his race. He looks at all matters from the standpoint of his class, and judges all questions by his class prejudices. His daily work controls his reasoning. Our clergymen are educated, and education and wealth have always been associated. They are learned, and learning is a class distinction. They are refined and cultured—other class distinctions. Their habits are sedentary and join them to the class of leisure. Their opinions, sympathies, sentiments, prejudices, very easily agree with those of the class to which so many ties bind them. As the mirror reflects what stands before it, so the clergy reflect college halls, parsonage libraries and ladies' parlors. As a sailor talks and walks and thinks like other sailors, so a clergyman thinks and feels and talks like the members of the class to which he belongs. As the laborer is first of all a workman and after that an American, so the clergyman is first of all a minister and after that a Christian and an American. If any minister will meditate and pray over this question God will make him first of all a man and a Christian.

This indifference to economic injustice and political corruption is shown in many ways. We mention only two:

First, the ministry generally claims to be conservative. There is a good conservatism that conserves what is good and casts out what is bad. There is a still better conservatism that seeks to restore the good which has passed away. But the conservatism the ministry boasts of is preserving things as they are. If taxes, for example, press unduly on the poorest, the conservative justifies unjust taxation. If our laws assist the extortion of trusts and monopolies, the conservative defends the robbery. If our political methods promote grafting, the conservative is a grafter. Clerical conservatism is the Port Arthur of all that is evil in our American civilization.

The other sign of clerical indiffer-