

# Municipal Reform and Church

By Frank Moss, President of the New York Police Board

**T**HE NEED of reform in the local governments of our country is felt by all good and patriotic people. Few of our largest cities have escaped public exposure of official corruption—and so general is the disease that we discover its symptoms in the smaller communities also. Even the national government is not free from scandal. At the present time while congratulating New York on its recent deliverance from a despotism of crime and venality, we are mourning over the exhibition of civic decadence in the ring-ridden city of Philadelphia, and wondering at the failure of the great state of Pennsylvania to make effective protest at the shameful invasion of local rights by tyrannical central authority. We read in the magazines the thrilling stories of "Tweed Days in St. Louis," "The Shame of Minneapolis," "Pittsburg, a City Ashamed," "Philadelphia Corrupt and Contented"—we read in the proceedings of the National Municipal League these equally appalling stories, and we add for ourselves titles of other suffering cities in nearly all parts of the land. Thinking men are looking for the cause of this epidemic, and are searching anxiously for a cure.

The disease had its season of greatest growth in a long period of indifference and carelessness, wherein nobody gave heed to the growth of dishonesty, and the alliance of crime and officialism. This period we trust is coming to an end, for in every city and community may be found a slowly awakening civic pride and a more or less numerous body of reformers.

It is beginning to be realized that to betray one's oath of office and to barter the community's interests for personal gain is treason, and that an extension of the evil, or even the tolerance of its present conditions means danger to national life and glory. The movements to reform local governments have in many cases been spasmodic and unintelligent, and often they have moved by combinations or fusions of discordant elements, some of which were anxious only to be "IN."

These movements have not been grounded as they should be on high and continuing moral and patriotic purpose and therefore have not supported each other and have not persisted in themselves against opposition and defeat. There has not been a more critical period in our national his-

tory—nor a period wherein was more greatly needed the highest type of moral devotion and love of country, for in this time of prosperity, when we are not endangered by blows from without, the very richness of our growth is developing internal rottenness.

If we look fairly and speak truly, we are bound to admit that the conceded corruption is not a mere growth of politics, but is rather an extension into politics of methods that are common in business life. Gross evils are tolerated by business men in their city governments because they are familiar with similar evils in business.

Realizing the gravity and the extent of the evil, we look about for some extensive organized force through which we may deal with it radically, and instinctively we turn to the church. We have a right to turn to the church as a conservator of morals and a fountain of patriotism. We feel that it must be concerned with the conditions in which the people live, in which characters are formed, in which the determining environments of life are established.

It must be concerned with the government of a city, when that government makes compacts with thieves, gamblers and harlots and opens doors to hell on the public streets so that children and youth may stray therein and be lost.

When we realize that governmental corruption has its necessary root in business immorality and in individual laxity, we feel that a live church must know the facts and must put forth a worthy effort to correct the wrong. But truth compels the reluctant statement that of all sleepy bodies the one which shows the slowest disposition to rise to the obvious opportunity and duty is the church—the very body which by its foundation, its purpose, its size, its organization and its general diffusion over the land is best fitted for the task.

Let us see what the church in the United States consists of:

It contains 28,000,000 communicants. It has 374 out of 567 colleges and seminaries. Its young people's associations are large and enthusiastic. The Christian Endeavor society (interdenominational) has nearly 4,000,000 members distributed among over 60,000 societies. Epworth league (Methodist) has nearly 1,000,000 members. The Young Men's Christian association has over 300,000 members. The Sunday schools, the

Young Men's Hebrew association, the Young Women's Christian association, the Women's Christian Temperance union, the societies of the Catholic church, the societies of the Protestant Episcopal church and many other smaller organizations are numerous and busy.

Various denominations maintain publishing houses doing immense volumes of business, and they circulate many newspapers and magazines. (The Methodists alone have fifteen.) The great churches are splendidly organized, maintain armies of preachers, teachers and workers and meet annually in conference and convention. The young people's societies have great national gatherings with thousands of delegates. They make heroic efforts to evangelize the heathen.

The weakness of this grand army is in these two facts: (1) It is divided into sects which do not work in harmony, and (2) too many of the local churches are mere religious clubs, affording delightful associations and rich privileges for the members, but not touching the life of the community. This condition is not within the spirit and purpose of the founder of the church, which is in danger of losing its prestige and its rightful privileges by the neglect of its duty.

Every church society should know thoroughly the locality in which it is placed and should assume a responsibility for its moral condition, especially as affecting the young, and for the conditions of life affecting the homes. Every church should go back to an earnest propaganda, and an individual teaching of the principles of the ten commandments. Every denomination should support its individual churches in these matters. Every church should preach business honesty and fair play, should insist on honest and faithful public service, and should put these matters as religious essentials. Here should be constant, persistent and earnest prayer for city, community and nation—the enthusiasm of the church running into patriotism as well as religion—(patriotic prayer meetings and revivals if you like.)

There should be national conferences of all religious bodies, for deliberation and prayer on subjects of national honor and uprightness, regardless entirely of political policies or preferences. This would bring life to the church and would help to bring purity to the nation. Until the religious

forces of the country find the way to fraternize and to attack these moral problems, appropriately and effectively, the fights against corruption will be local and spasmodic.

It is not meant that the church should seek to dictate methods or candidates or in any way to control public policies, but simply that, like other organizations of citizens interested in good government, it should be heard and felt for the right. Its deadness in almost every struggle for decency is incomprehensible, and its coming into the struggle appropriately and with its splendid forces and resources would presage victory. Fortunately we have an example of what a church may do, in the demand which Bishop Potter and his denomination made on the then mayor of New York City, that a certain section of the city be made decent for women and children to live in. Mayor Van Wyck refused to listen—and the appeal was so righteous, so forceful, so proper that it went straight to the hearts of the people and those of all religions and of no religion responded to the inspired leadership and delivered not only the district mentioned, but the whole city.

The church is a moral organization, each of its leading denominations covering the land and having the means of combining thought and effort; and all professing principles which should permit a fraternization. It exists for spiritual and moral purposes and therefore its intelligence and its conscience should be specially acute to general immoralities tending to vitiate the standards of living.

There is no body or set of sympathetic bodies which should be so sensitive and none which has such powers of opposition to general evil. Its indifference to the prevalence of shocking criminality in government is a plain indication that the conscience of the communities and of the nation is asleep—and full deliverance, founded as it must be upon aroused and virile public conscience need not be expected in advance of the awakening of the church. When its millions sing and pray, "God Bless Our Native Land," with adequate fervor of spirit and consistency of life, a new era of good government and of civic advance will come to the nation.

New York City.

## What Caused the Ice Deluge?

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**T**HERE are two brothers that cannot survive separation—water and life.

Water is a chemical composition like a thousand others. It has its fixed limits of temperature, within which it remains true "water," the liquid thing that is so indispensable to life that no plant can drive its sap, no heart pump its blood without it.

Zero—and the water freezes, becomes hard stone. All water on the globe frozen and the whole wonderful machinery of life would stop.

Let us imagine the process developing slowly. The temperature sinks steadily. All clouds change into snow. Snow piles itself up not only on high mountain peaks, but everywhere. From all the heights slide ice rivers, glaciers. With tremendous violence the veins of ice burst within the rocks, fragmenting them. So it proceeds until everything is one flat field of ice, one single boundless Greenland. And in this ice lies life, lies humanity, buried like the Siberian mammoths.

Those mammoths themselves played a role in the production of this mental picture of a new ice period. A bit of the nineteenth century must be recalled.

In its first half the world began to learn strange facts. Far away from the mountains of granite, geology found vast blocks of granite lying in the flat lands. Incredible distances away from the glacier districts of today the hard rocks showed the characteristic bruises and grooves made by the sliding sole of the glacier. Even the limestone and seashell layers of the limestone hills near Berlin, in the flat north German plains, showed that a gigantic glacier once crept over them.

In the heart of Germany, France and England lay the bones of animals some of which still live in the icest polar regions, like the musk ox, others of which have been preserved as corpses in the ice of the north like the mammoth elephants in northernmost Siberia.

Old Alpine guides in Switzerland first uttered the belief that the earth once must have known a period of cold vastly greater than that of modern days.

Goethe arrives at the same idea. At 1800 Agassiz knots together the loose speculations and rounds out a picture—the picture of the "glacial period."

But Agassiz himself still labors under the spell of Cuvier's teachings of great world catastrophes. He tells us that the last great catastrophe before the appearance of man was not caused by red-hot lava in the interior of earth, but by fierce cold, numbing ice. The mammoths were not boiled in scalding waves, but were

hurled living into ice and snow and there froze miserably into mummies.

And, since this was the last act before our time, it gave the world a hint as to what will happen to it. When the inner heat of the earth shall suffice no longer to seize us with fiery arms and devour us the ice giant will come. The winter of the Christ child, with the icicles on the pine trees, becomes the angel of death for humanity.

Agassiz has been dead for many years, and the teaching of the glacial period has undergone many alterations.

In the first place, painful research, which heaped pebble on pebble slowly, proved at last that the glacial epoch constituted no general world catastrophe. At no time had the entire earth been buried under universal ice.

The ice did occasionally spread itself out much farther from the poles than it does today, so that certain great areas of northern Asia, northern Europe and northern America experienced a local glacial period to a certain degree. But it cannot be decided whether or not the ice swept simultaneously from both the North and South poles. The glacial traces on the southern hemisphere of the earth need not necessarily indicate the same hour in world history as do those of the northern hemisphere.

Under any circumstances there remained room enough for organic life. The mammoth of Europe became extinct not because the ice killed it, but because it wandered away and died out owing to the increased warmth of the earth, which it could not bear.

And another creature that lived simultaneously with the mammoth on the edge of the ice remained in the land, accommodated itself to new conditions and survived through the new time after the ice period as bravely as it had survived the ice period itself and probably a certain period before that. This creature was man.

In the glacial debris of the ice period lie his first known remains. And we can perceive dimly that this mighty winter, instead of being able to annihilate the splendid child of old nature, had played a most decisive part in the most important beginnings of its mental development. Perhaps it was that tremendous Christmas that gave man the gift of making fire by artificial means. And with the red fire flickering on the hearth, the genius to whom the mastery of earth was destined parted forever from the beast.

The latest research permits us to go a little farther.

It is possible that this great glacial period in the time of mammoth and cave man was not the first of such phenomenon on the earth. It is possible that similar ice

formations extended mysteriously in earlier epochs into warm lands. This would take us back into the time of those high-trunked fern forests whose remains furnish us with our coal today, and further back still.

But the evidence is that even then the glacial periods were anything else rather than annihilating catastrophes.

In the particular time when such an early period of ice occurred, at the end of the coal period, according to the belief of prominent students, a prodigious, crucial advance was going on in the life of animals. Out of cold-blooded, lizard-like reptiles the warm-blooded birds and mammals were beginning to develop—animals that carried an equable, lasting supply of heat in their own bodies, and in whose skin the lizard scales were changing to warm feathers, warm furs.

And it was directly through this gift of warmth that the mental power of animals was increased immeasurably. Without it the development of man would not have been possible; man, who, later, in the next ice period, continued the progress of the uplifting power of heat by devising the means of fire and the making of clothing.

Ever since man has had the picture of an ice period or of many ice periods before his eyes he has been seeking for the cause of them.

First there was a simple theory: that the earth, once red hot throughout, then with a cooling crust like a vast cinder, was heated for a long period by the hidden heat of its interior. This heat decreased gradually until the first signs of the cooling of the old planet became visible with the beginning of the first glacial epoch.

But this theory has been driven into its last lair. It has been ascertained that we living things in the earth's surface receive no heat from its interior. The most simple proof is in the polar regions.

In the long months when they are cut off from the sun the surface sinks hopelessly into the grasp of killing cold. And if there should be no sun at all those regions would be frozen hopelessly. Nothing reaches them from below to save them. And what is true "there" is true "here."

And yet we in America, in Germany, in Asia have no polar cold, no ice period at present, and this "present" dates back for many thousands of years. It is the sun that regulates our temperature. It does it today, and it did it when the glaciers crept over our level plains.

In the sun we must seek for the cause of periodical ice times.

Looking roughly at the course of the earth around the sun, it describes a circle. That the world knows since Copernicus. But the finer calculation of a Kepler ascertained that the path is more of the

shape of the outlines of an egg. It is an ellipse.

In an ellipse the sun does not stand exactly in the center of the course. The planet sweeps alternately a little nearer to, alternately a little farther away, from it.

Still closer and nearer calculation brought the proof that this ellipse itself was susceptible to still further oscillations. In the course of thousands and still thousands of years it approaches the true circle at times and at times exaggerates its elliptical form.

In our days the ellipse is tame. The difference between aphelion or sun distance and perihelion or sun-nearness, is slight in the course of a year. What the layman feels as the difference between summer and winter today is influenced only insignificantly by that oscillation. It is caused by another thing, the position of the earth's axis.

For some entirely subjective reason the earth stands oblique in its course, and owing to this its northern pole and its southern pole alternately turn away obstinately from the sun for months, and thus receive either none or only weak, slanting rays.

But the ellipse does not appear to have been so tame always. It had extremes of oscillation. At times the vagaries must have interfered decisively with the course of the seasons on earth.

The hemisphere of earth that happens at such times to have winter, owing to the obliquity of the axis, must have received so little sun that finally there came a winter so fierce, so long, that the summer that followed was powerless to combat it.

Under the conditions of today it would be the southern hemisphere that would suffer, for we in the northern hemisphere always have summer when we are in sun distance.

But the position of the axis itself is also subject to periodical changes. We have exact calculations to show them.

The obliquity changes a tiny bit with every revolution of the old earth around the sun.

In the course of a certain number of thousands of years this produces a condition diametrically opposite to that of today; the southern hemisphere will have its summer when it gets to sun distance, and the north will have winter then.

Think now of a time, long thousands of years ago, when the lengthening of the ellipse had reached the extreme point. So it remained for thousands of years, for these great oscillations occupy immense periods of time.

During these thousands of years the south pole and the north pole alternately

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