

Is the Question of Evil an Economic Question?

IN an address before the diocesan convention as reported in the *Washington Post* and the *Washington Star* of February 4, 1925, the bishop of Washington is quoted as saying: "The problem of our time is *not economic* or racial; it is domestic and social; it is *not superficial*; it cuts clear through to the very footings of our boasted Christian civilization." We can heartily agree with the bishop in his statement that the problem of evil in the world today is not superficial, and that it cuts clear through to the very footings of our boasted Christian civilization; but we cannot agree with him when he says that the problem of evil is not an economic one, for we believe that questions of economics, instead of being superficial as the bishop clearly implies, place their stamp on our domestic and social customs as well as on our industrial and business relations; control discussion, public opinion and legislation; give direction and impulse to education; and prevent the underlying principle, and hence nullify the practical results, of religious teaching.

Lust for power, pleasure, and ease has ever been the governing passion of the human heart and since by the use of money all these things can be procured, the desire for material wealth transcends all other human desires. Although this is scriptural and true, religionists never have admitted it because they feel that money, rather than God, is the source of their own strength, and because they fear the effect of a condemnation of the money power on their own budgets.

It was Aaron, the priest, who at the foot of Mount Sinai, and in the absence of Moses, who had gone up to receive the law, set up a golden calf for the people to worship. As a result of this apostasy, this substitution of material wealth for God, upon the return of Moses and Joshua, and under divine impulsion, war broke out in the camp and every man slew his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor (Exodus XXXII). If the worship of material wealth, in place of the worship of God, is the cause of war, why is it that the problem of evil is not an economic problem?

Economics is the science which treats of the production and distribution of wealth, and wealth is usually conceived of in terms of its universal equivalent money. Now if the love of money is the root of all evil, as stated in I Timothy VI-10, how is it that the problem of evil is not an economic problem?

Money as a medium of exchange, and hence a universal equivalent for material wealth and service, is the god of this world, and love of money, rather than love of God, is the real worship of the people. Since this is so the solution of the problem of evil must be through the destruction of inordinate love for money, and this can only be brought about by making the accumulation of large fortunes by

fraud impossible (See James V-1 to 6). The possession through statutory law, custom or convention, of a monopoly in something necessary to life and happiness is a fraud on humanity. To reduce nature to private ownership is the greatest fraud that can be perpetrated and the one specifically forbidden by the Levitical Law (Leviticus XXV-23). It is the aim of Single Taxers to destroy this mother of all monopolies, this creator of class consciousness and procurer of war, and so take away from the money worshipper forever the power to consummate his desire, and by this means to alienate his affection from this false god and restore it again to the true.

If those who are sincerely trying to find a remedy for the evils of today would read their Bibles a little more assiduously instead of racking their inventive brains, progress would be more rapid and peace more quickly secured.

—HENRY L. PECKHAM.

OHIO'S State department of securities has refused permission to real estate salesmen to sell Florida land in Ohio, but the vile business is going on boldly. The anxiety of the authorities is not credited by the cynical to any real altruistic feeling for the "innocent investor," but to the demand of Ohio speculators who have land at home to sell. Cleveland, for instance, is slipping industrially, according to a business man of that city, and has a real estate slump. The large speculators there are making frantic efforts to attract buyers, and dislike the competition of Florida touters for land gambling. Hence the desire of politicians to "protect" the people from Florida speculators.

IF any man in possession of his faculties were dumped down on Crusoe's Island, he could obtain a livelihood without difficulty by working for it. Why cannot he always do the same here?" Because the means of life being privately owned, he cannot obtain such ready access to them. He is dependent in large measure upon the will of others for the opportunity to labor. . . . No sane being would press the right of private ownership so far as to over-ride the fundamental interests of the community.

—REV. R. J. CAMPBELL.

"If as much ability had been given to the tax problem as has been given to the making of rules of golf, the tax problem would long since have disappeared," says E. W. Doty, of Cleveland, Ohio, who is himself an enthusiastic golfer.

FIFTY-SIX acres in London, purchased in 1741 from a former Lord Salisbury for about \$30,000, has recently been sold for about \$9,000,000.

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