

for the crime of this instrument rests on those who fashioned and used it.

We would extend our sympathy to the great British people. The army which is the instrument of their Government in Ireland would also seem to be the instrument of the destruction of that moral heritage which was their glory and which cast its lustre on each and all of them. The sun of that glory seems finally to have set over Ireland. British "justice" has become a discredited thing. The official "Black-and-Tans" in Ireland compete for the dishonor of Anglo-Saxon civilisation with our unofficial lynch mobs. And decent folk everywhere are shamed and scandalised that such things can still be in their day and generation.* We welcomed the British Labor Report on Conditions in Ireland and the reports of the Englishwomen's International League and of the British Society of Friends—whose moral leadership, rising above the prejudices of race and nationality, has been in this great spiritual catastrophe of England almost the only sign of our common Christianity. We wish the Peace with Ireland Council Godspeed. We would congratulate the *Manchester Guardian*, the *London Nation*, the *London Daily Herald*, the *New Statesman*, the *Westminster Gazette*, and the *London Daily News* for the courageous stand they have taken in exposing and denouncing to the British people the murder done in their name. And we hope that the spirit of these efforts may be strengthened, to the end that the wrong done to Ireland may be righted and the agony of her people cease. When these things shall be the great British people will emerge from the darkness that now encompasses them into the glory of a new day.

*Both in England and America it has been suggested that our right to criticise the Imperial British rule in Ireland is impaired by certain examples of American imperialism which contravene our boasted belief in the principle of "government by consent of the governed." The members of the Commission are vitally concerned for American honor and are opposed to coercive imperialism wherever and by whomsoever it is practised. Their present concern with Ireland is prompted by the acuteness of the issue and its bearing on international friendship. In the course of the Commission's investigation it has become deeply impressed with the capacity of the Irish for self-government.

(To be continued.)

THE DUTIES CONNECTED WITH PRIVATE PROPERTY

(By the REV. JOHN E. ROTHENSTEINER, in the *Fortnightly Review*, N.Y.)

It may surprise many, though it is not really surprising in itself, what utterly bad arguments are produced to sustain such a rotten cause as usury or the taking of interest. Here is one out of many, furnished by a writer in a late number of the *America* of New York (August 13):

"The owner has a right to take interest, first, by reason of his proprietorship, for an owner may do what he wills with his own."

An owner may do what he wills with his own, in furtherance of the common good, not in violation of the rights of society. In fact, no man is the *absolute* owner of anything. According to Christian ethics, man is the steward of God. The Almighty Creator retains the proprietorship of all things created. Indeed, God has made all things on earth for the use of man; not of one man, however, but of mankind. The poorest and lowliest has a God-given right to a fair share in the goods of earth. The rich man is bound in conscience to use his superfluous wealth for the good of his less fortunate neighbor.

The unequal distribution of wealth has for its purpose, not the enslavement of the poor by the rich, but rather the fostering of brotherly love and kindness between the various classes of society. Not that some might live in luxury and ease, and others pine in misery and want, but that the poor and unfortunate and the thoughtless and wayward might be helped to a better way of living, and that the rich might gain friends for themselves by the proper use of "the mammon of iniquity."

The human race is the great family of God, in which the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, are members on equal terms. It is plain, therefore, that no one may do what he wills with his own to the direct detriment of his brother.

Now, it is easily possible that, under present capitalistic conditions, the rich will grow richer and the poor poorer, and that within measurable time a few will own the entire wealth of the earth, and the masses will have to content themselves with the scraps and leavings, a condition of affairs in absolute contradiction to the divine ordinance.

Some may say that these results will never come because other forces will tend to equalise matters. Possibly so; yet our contention stands that the principle, "an owner may do what he wills with his own," must inevitably lead to the conclusion we have drawn from it. What shall we say of the fatherhood of God, and what of the brotherhood of man, if some fortunate owner of a carload of wheat dumps it into the river because he cannot get the desired price for it from a half-starved populace? This is no imaginary case. Vast harvests of wheat and corn have been allowed to rot in the fields because the price of these staples was not as high as anticipated. And yet there are millions of God's children to-day crying for bread, slowly starving, and dying for lack of this very gift of God's goodness to mankind, but now left rotting in the fields, on the principle that "the owner may do as he wills with his own."

If the poor are constrained to pay a high price for bread when bread is scarce, they should also have the advantage of cheap bread when bread is plentiful. To create an artificial scarcity by keeping a part of the harvests of the earth from the market, is a sin against God and mankind.

But, you say, the market must be sustained. Overproduction demoralises the market. Therefore it is economically right and morally just to manipulate the output.

We ask: Does man exist for the sake of the market, or the market for the sake of man? Let us assume that the market price of apples is high. Only those better situated can afford to buy them. Prices being high, however, and the apple crop being good, shipments are beginning to pour in. Prices begin to decline, but the profits are growing less. Now to keep up prices the dealers dump a number of carloads into the river in order "to stabilise the market." The poorer people would be glad to buy these apples at a fair price, but that would not help the market. "An owner may do what he wills with his own," say these usurers. Are they right?

No. Private ownership is sacred only if it is held on this Christian principle that all men are but stewards of God and must render a strict account to Him for the goods and talents He has entrusted to them. It is partly on account of the almost universal disregard of this principle that the good Lord declared it so very difficult, nay well nigh impossible for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. Thus the world is gradually regaining the conviction that the unrest, the economic disturbance, and social misery so characteristic of our day cannot be remedied by any thing less than the full and honest acceptance of the law of Christ.

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