

ment. The conscientious observance of this commandment would even lead the citizen to examine the systems of taxation and the manner in which they distribute the burdens of government, and this examination could not be carried very far without raising a question which many now ignore, namely, whether taxes collected almost entirely from consumption are just and equitable, and another question, closely related to it, "Can the mass of the people, laboring for small compensation, be equitably taxed for the support of manufacturers who enjoy a large income at public expense?"

As that commandment were the rule of conduct it would not only abolish petty larceny which sometimes accounts for the loss of a chicken, a pig, a coat or a pocketbook, but that grand larceny also which is perpetrated through legislation which robs the many for the benefit of the few.

A proper observance of that commandment would create a public opinion that would drive out of respectable society the high-toned pilferers who trample upon all laws, human and divine, and silence criticism by the magnitude of their peculations.

What man from the head of the trust down to the lowest official or employe, if actuated by a love for his neighbor as intense and constant as his regard for himself, would employ cunning or the advantage which comes with great commercial influence to extort from consumers in order to pay dividends on watered stock, or to bankrupt rivals, by reducing prices in his territory only to raise them higher after competition has been destroyed. The questions which arouse antagonisms between capital and labor will disappear when both employers and employes live up to that great commandment.

Even the money question, which seems so complicated to many, and which the advocates of "honest money" claim the exclusive right to settle, raises a moral question which the Christian citizen cannot rightfully ignore. No economic question can in the long run be more important than the question which fixes the standard by which values are measured. The increased production of gold has stopped for the present the appreciation of the dollar, but no one can tell how long prices will remain stationary. When the abnormal conditions which have raised prices give way to normal conditions we may again start upon an era of falling prices. During the period from '73 to '96, when as a result of legislation the dollar was constantly appreciating, there were multitudes of conscientious Christian people whose knowledge of the subject was so superficial that they did not see the injustice in the financial system that gave us the rising dollar. They would have protested in a moment against a bushel measure so constructed that it gradually and constantly enlarged, because they would have recognized that such a measure was unfair to the men who had to deliver an ever-increasing quantity of merchandise in payment of a fixed debt; but they seemed indifferent to the fact that the dollar, like such an expanding bushel measure, was slowly but surely transferring the property of the wealth-producer over to the possession of the owners of fixed investments.

If a man accepts the great commandment as a rule and tries to live up to it, will he thoughtlessly turn the masses of the people over to the tender mercies of a few financiers who demand the right to issue a nation's money and control the volume thereof for the pretended interests of the public, but really for their own profit?

And above all, will not a believer in that commandment scrutinize the doctrine upon which imperialism is based? Will he not look with suspicion upon a policy which builds a government upon force, taxes people without representation and then distributes among carpet-bag officials the money raised from helpless subjects? Would it not lead to a careful examination to the end that

the property of the wards might not be dissipated among influential exploiters who look with a covetous eye upon the land and undeveloped wealth of the Orient?

The Christian citizen when fully alive to his civic duties and fully aroused to the far-reaching influence of his vote, will not become so engrossed in the pursuit of the dollar as to be ignorant of the issues that present themselves and of the manner in which public servants discharge their official duties; he will not only see to it that public officials encourage the cultivation of the virtues, but he will see to it that the public servant shall never forget that his office is a public trust and must be administered as such.

There is certainly room for the movement which Mr. Johnson has inaugurated, and whether the readers of *The Commoner* agree with its editor in his applications of moral principles to pending issues no one can doubt that too little time is given to the conscientious study of public questions with a view to finding the moral principles which control them.

No one can doubt that the final result would be better if every citizen recognized the responsibility which the government places upon him and endeavored to discharge that duty, more concerned about the influence of his conduct upon the country than of its influence upon the party with which he is connected.

Taxation Without Representation

A dispatch from Canada says that the members of parliament are discussing "the refusal of the government to contribute to the imperial defense scheme." The dispatch reads:

Ottawa, Ont., Dec. 11.—(Special Correspondence.)—Members of parliament of both political parties from widely scattered parts of the dominion have been here the last week seeing ministers and transacting business for their constituencies with the various departments of state. It was an opportunity to ascertain the views prevailing in different sections of the country on the refusal of the government to contribute to the imperial defense scheme.

On one point they were practically unanimous—namely: there can be no taxation without representation. Canada is not represented in the imperial councils, and until she has a voice in the disposal of the money strong objection will be raised to any vote from the Canadian treasury for the purpose referred to.

The principle involved is the same as that which led to the loss of the American colonies by Great Britain, only in the recent instance the contribution was to be nominally of a voluntary character, while in the former case it was to be compulsory.

One of the members said it would be a long time before the people of this country will consent to hand over a yearly contribution of hard cash to an admittedly incompetent and antediluvian board of admiralty to squander without having anything to say in that expenditure. If the British government really desires financial assistance from the colonies it must either provide in the future for the representation of those contributing colonies in imperial councils or run the risk of the growth of a sentiment of dissatisfaction, which will, in the end, do more harm than good to the imperial cause.

Republicans may feel some mortification at contemplation of the fact that the subjects of a king are more opposed to taxation without representation than the eulogists of our strenuous president.

The Commoner Cartoon.

In this issue *The Commoner* presents a cartoon by Guy R. Spencer, a promising western cartoonist who has been engaged by this paper to contribute regularly. This cartoon is entitled "He's not afraid of that end of the weapon, Mr. Knox."

It is not generally understood, as it should be, that Mr. Roosevelt's administration has appealed

to the incidental provisions of the Sherman anti-trust law rather than the chief feature of that statute.

It is not as generally understood as it should be that in his famous "campaign against the trusts," Mr. Roosevelt's attorney general has invoked the incidental powers of the existing law and that he has wholly ignored the first, second and third sections of the anti-trust statute.

These sections are as follows:

Section 1. Every contract, combination in the form of trust or otherwise, or conspiracy, in restraint of trade or commerce among the several states, or with foreign nations, is hereby declared to be illegal. Every person or persons who shall make any such contract or engage in any such combination or conspiracy, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and on conviction thereof, shall be punished by fine not exceeding five thousand dollars, or by imprisonment not exceeding one year, or by both said punishments, in the discretion of the court.

Sec. 2. Every person who shall monopolize, or attempt to monopolize, or combine with any person or persons, to monopolize any part of the trade or commerce among the several states, or with foreign nations, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and, on conviction thereof, shall be punished by fine not exceeding five thousand dollars, or by imprisonment not exceeding one year, or by both said punishments in the discretion of the court.

Sec. 3. Every contract, combination in form of trust or otherwise, or conspiracy, in restraint of trade or commerce in any territory of the United States or of the District of Columbia, or in restraint of trade or commerce between any such territory and another, or between any such territory or territories and any state or states or the District of Columbia, or with foreign nations, or between the District of Columbia and any state or states or foreign nations is hereby declared illegal. Every person who shall make any such contract or engage in any such combination or conspiracy, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and, on conviction thereof, shall be punished by fine not exceeding five thousand dollars, or by imprisonment not exceeding one year, or by both said punishments, in the discretion of the court."

The cartoon correctly represents Mr. Knox as attacking the trade conspirators with the point of the handle while he carefully refrains from using that more effective weapon at the other end which in the cartoon is represented by the battle-axe.

The cartoon is not overdrawn in this respect. The criminal indictment is the most effective of weapons. However proud, arrogant and rich men may have become in the habitual defiance of law, they are weak and impotent in the presence of a criminal statute when a courageous and able prosecuting officer undertakes seriously to call them to account.

The battle-axe, representative of the chief provision of the Sherman anti-trust law, is a powerful weapon. Every good citizen will hope that Mr. Roosevelt's attorney general will finally conclude to make a serious assault upon men who conspire in restraint of trade and who seek to obtain corners upon the people's necessities.

If Mr. Roosevelt is serious, if Mr. Knox is serious, the battle-axe will be used.

Legislation Against Silver.

A dispatch from Peking, published in the daily papers of January 4, says that the fall in silver has already increased the Chinese indemnity 20 per cent—if payment is demanded in gold—and adds that further increase is probable "from the expected adoption of the gold standard in the Philippines and in the Straits settlement." The Peking correspondent recognizes what many republicans here persistently deny, namely, that legislation affects the price of silver. The adoption of the gold standard in the Philippines and in the Straits settlement by increasing the demand for gold and decreasing the demand for silver would influence the market value of both metals throughout the world and yet the gold worshippers who are responsible for the growing gap between the metals lay all the blame upon natural laws and despise silver because it does not keep pace with gold.