

## The Nature of Monopoly

Cincinnati, June 28.—"The Nature of Monopoly." This was the subject of a sermon by Herbert S. Bigelow at the Vine Street Congregational church today.

Text: "Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his."—Hab. 2:7.

The day is passed, said Mr. Bigelow, for swaying men by the citation of Scriptural authority. That is well. Who does not know what confusion of thought and viciousness of conduct have resulted from the practice of silencing reason with Scripture texts?

Shakespeare never said a truer thing than when he declared:

"The Devil can cite Scripture for his purpose."

If recalcitrant preachers wish to furnish comfort to monopolists they will find as much Scripture for their purpose as did the preachers who justified from "Holy Writ" that cruder form of servitude called chattel slavery.

Even some of the reported sayings of Jesus are not incapable of being pressed into such a cause.

In Matthew 20:15 we read: "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" This is the ultimatum with which an employer rejected a petition for higher wages. I wonder that the pulpit apologists for existing wrongs have not made use of this text. Mr. Parry's sermons might all be preached from it. The men who "have nothing to arbitrate" would find comfort in it.

There is another passage which might give them some comfort provided they do not look too closely into its meaning, and that is the parable of the unprofitable servant. Here we have the familiar picture of a shrewd and not over-scrupulous monopolist—one of those men who have no interest in any principle save the principal which yields them interest. Let the servant describe him.

"Lord, I know thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter."

Of course this monopolist is not commended in the parable. Neither is he condemned. If one were looking for the Scriptural authority to reap the fruits of other men's labor he might easily persuade himself that he found it here.

Then there is the famous reminder that we have the poor always with us. We know what valiant service that text has done in the cause of economic slavery. Jesus might also have said: "The slaves ye have always with you." He would have stated a fact. And it would have been as logical to discourage all attempts to abolish chattel slavery because, forsooth, slavery always had existed, as to reconcile ourselves to poverty in the future because it has existed in the past.

Even the best of our preachers have not escaped the error of looking at poverty as a blessing in disguise, when they should see that it is the fruit of monopoly and the mark of slavery. For example, take these words of so great and good a man as Phillips Brooks:

"I know how superficial and unfeeling, how like mere mockery, words in praise of poverty may seem . . . but I am sure that the poor man's dignity and freedom, his self-respect and energy, depend upon his cordial knowledge that his poverty is a true region and kind of life, with its own chances of character, its own springs of happiness and revelations of God. Let him resist the characterlessness which often comes with being poor. Let him insist on respecting the condition where he lives. Let him learn to love it."

Reflect for a moment on the "poor man's dignity." Enthuse if you can over the poor man's freedom.

It is evident that those who speak thus do not know the meaning of that dreadful word "poverty."

The wages of one of the girls who clerks in a certain dry goods store is six dollars a week. Out of that she paid four dollars and a half for board. Imagine the "freedom" of paying for clothes and dentists' and doctors' bills and street car fares and summer vacations and insurance and savings account out of one dollar and a half a week! This girl is to be married. The girls in the store have contributed out of their scant wages to buy their sister-worker clothes necessary for her wedding.

Last week I received a letter from a manufacturer in Pittsburg. The day he wrote twenty men had called at his factory seeking work. Half of these men could be hired for \$1.25 a day or less. In his factory men are working for nine dollars a week and less. That wage will buy such food and housing as the poor are accustomed to, but it cannot buy food and housing as workmen ought to be able to command. How can such men afford to lose three

days' time and spend money for railroad fare to attend a convention of their political party? They stay at home and work. Those who have money go. Thus wealth rules and the poor man's freedom becomes a name only.

Suppose we substitute "slavery" for the word "poverty" and "slave" for "poor man." Then we should read:

"I am sure that the slave's dignity and freedom, his self-respect and energy, depend upon his cordial knowledge that his slavery is a true region and a kind of life, with its own chances of character, its own springs of happiness and revelations of God. Let him resist the characterlessness which often comes with being a slave. Let him insist on respecting the condition where he lives. Let him learn to love it."

We all feel the mockery of that. So would we feel the mockery of all this praise of poverty if we understood that we have monopolies today which are forms of slavery and that from this slavery comes that condition of hopeless drudgery which we call poverty.

The world has greater need of preachers to expose the nature of monopoly than to declaim on the blessings of poverty.

"Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his." We need sermons on such texts as this.

Monopoly is a law-created advantage which enables some to increase that which is not theirs. It is a method of getting other people's money without getting into gaol.

Thirty years ago John Stuart Mill hit upon the base of all monopoly when he said:

"Land is limited in quantity, while the demand for it, in a prosperous country, is constantly increasing. The incomes of land owners are rising while they are sleeping, through the general prosperity produced by the labor and outlay of other people."

In the last fifteen years the land values in the city of Boston has increased \$245,000,000. That money is the property of the city of Boston. But by land monopoly it has been diverted into private pockets.

Woe to that city and woe to that civilization which permits the few thus to increase that which is not theirs.

## HARDY'S COLUMN

Much has been said and written, of late, in regard to the right of the state to shorten the life of a murderer. Has not the state the same divine right to shorten life that it has to shorten liberty and the pursuit of happiness? Liberty is God-given just as much as life. According to the Declaration of Independence, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness all stand on the same elevation and if by crime we forfeit our right to one we at the same time forfeit our right to all three. Reason and Christianity sanctions the shortening of a criminal's life as clearly as it sanctions the cutting short his liberty.

Self-defense and protection and the protection of community is one of the first laws of nature. It prevails all through the animal kingdom and even in the vegetable kingdom it is visible in a measure by thorns and hard shells. How can we guarantee self-defense and protection only to put the murderer where he can never commit murder again? Murder is often committed by prisoners in prison. Then after a few years they are likely to be liberated and as a rule they are the same beings.

Our governor has for years back let out life prisoners every Fourth of July. The greatest blessing we can confer upon a murderer is to shorten his life a few years or perhaps only a few days. A murderer can prepare for death in a few days just as well as in as many years. He is liable to commit more murders if allowed to live.

A majority of the Iowa democrats in state convention trampled underfoot and spit upon the two national Bryan platforms. We are today a Lincoln republican and still stand on every platform he stood on and hold to every principle he advocated. We are also a Bryan democrat and will be at the end of the next forty years. From childhood we have been opposed to slavery, unjust and unequal taxation and special laws for the benefit and protection of a few to the loss of the many. We have always been a political worshiper of the Declaration of Independence. And are grieved to think that our government has over-ridden those principles in the Philippine islands.

There seems to be a strong effort being made to frame a law and that the

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next congress will pass, limiting all day's work to eight hours. If such a law should pass employers would at once contract labor by the piece or by the hour. The next move would be to shorten hours to fifty minutes. The farmers who work for themselves generally work twelve hours in a day, and every boy and girl has to do a portion of the work. After seven or eight years of age they earn their own living. If our labor unions would encourage their members to go to work for themselves a llesing and no strikes would follow.

The murder of the king and queen of Servia with eight other royal blood officers seems to be sanctioned by a majority of the people of that country. After this they better limit the time that one person can be king. The slaughter of our three presidents was not sanctioned, publicly, by a single American human being. And the assassins in each case were put where they will never assassinate another president.

We have had one glorious court decision lately, that of cancelling the constitutional amendment that increased the pay of our legislators from \$3 to \$5 a day and from forty to sixty days' service. That amendment was counted in by republicans and when the fusion party undertook to play the same game the republicans kicked up a big row. The decision will undoubtedly be sanctioned by the supreme court and then a constitutional convention will be called by the next legislature. Lots of state money has been spent unlawfully by every administration for years.

Up in Manitoba, ten or fifteen hundred miles north of here, the sun rises at 3 in the morning and sets at 9 in the evening. Of course two or three more hours of sunshine in a day will help the growth of vegetation.

Seventy years ago a young man could be ordained and made a preacher or priest with rum or whisky on his breath. And visiting preachers were treated with strong drink. Twenty-five years ago young men with a cigar, pipe or end of tobacco in the mouth could gain ordination. Not so today in the Methodist church. It was only a little over a hundred years ago that the first seed of permanent people's government was planted. Before that time the rulers of the world were born rulers and whether idiot or knave they ruled and their children or nearest relative followed. Now there is not a crowned head on this continent and republics climb up near a score.

We can't believe that the taxpayers of the state of New York will vote for

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a hundred million of state bonds, the money to be expended in enlarging the Erie canal. The canal has already been enlarged two or three times. It is well that the matter is referred to the voters of the state. Referendum is one of Bryan's broad platform planks. There are many legislative and congressional acts now on the statute books that would be vetoed if submitted to a vote. The anti-silver bill of 1873 would have been vetoed ten to one if it had been submitted and if an income tax law was submitted today it would carry ten to one. Then would the high tariff, of today, that protects the trusts in selling goods in Europe twenty or sixty per cent cheaper than they sell here at home, be beaten ten to one if submitted. Senators and all judges should be elected by the people and there should be no life offices of any kind. If the taxpayers of New York would build, or buy, one or two double-track railroads from Buffalo to Albany they could move freight and passengers cheaper than they could on water. Rich politicians are willing the government should own and run canals, but not railroads, because railroads are the machines for making millionaires.

H. W. HARDY.

The single taxers told their story in the Henry George Edition. The socialists may tell theirs in the Karl Marx Edition, July 23, 1903.