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tion, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.'

We might pursue, almost indefinitely, this metaphor of the twelve gates, the different methods of approach by which men come at last to God. *We may think of it in terms of age.* Those pressing in at the East gate are they who accept Christ in early youth, when the sun is just rising upon their life.

'They that seek me early shall find me.' In days when Communism is Christianity's fiercest competitor, the Church must exert herself strenuously to lay her hand in guiding benediction upon the children, claiming them for Christ. Parents do well to remember that the easiest portals through which little ones may pass into the Kingdom of God are before them now in early impressionable years. 'On the east there are three gates.' We are either making it easier or more difficult for them to enter through these gates into the Kingdom of God.

From the South flock those who make the great decision in the noontime of their years. Others, again, come to the Saviour of men when the shadows lengthen in the West, at the sunset hour. And finally there are those who find salvation only by the North gate, when the winter storms begin, and human life is dying in mist and cold.

Or we might let our imaginations play over *the various types of mind which grow together into the supreme and final truth.* The Eastern gate is that of mysticism and introspection. The Western is that of practical service and humanitarian zeal. From the North comes the rugged intellectual fervour for doctrine which gave Calvinism so great a hold upon our Scottish Church. And through the South gate enters the mind ripened by the warm sunshine of affection and of love.<sup>1</sup>

East, North, South, West, there are gateways

<sup>1</sup> T. B. S. Thomson, *The Quest of Youth*, 43.

into the Kingdom of God. No person is barred, no nation is excluded. Right round and through the whole world of human experience there are set before us open doors which no man can shut. At the twenty-first verse of the chapter the words occur, 'the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the several gates was of one pearl.' Whence came the idea? The writer had loved his Master well, and once he heard Him say, 'The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls. And when he had found one pearl of great price he went and sold all he had and bought it.' And the men addressed said to one another: 'That is precisely what we have done. We have given up all we counted dear; we have surrendered our pearls of joy and comfort for him. But in him we have discovered the pearl of great price.' And so in later years, a devoted disciple was stirred in the loneliness of exile to share his thrilling vision of the City of God in which we enter through gates of pearl. Whether it be the East, the North, the South, or the West, the gate is always 'the pearl of great price,' it is always Jesus Christ. He meets us at every turn of life. He meets us in every vicissitude, for His is a love that follows hard after us and will not let us go. It is through Him, and through Him alone, that we enter into the Kingdom of God. And we can do it now. Moreover, if that word applies to individual men and women it applies no less to nations to-day. Amid international discord and confusion; amid dark and grievous misunderstandings, Jesus stands before the Eastern and the Northern, and the Southern and the Western nations, the undismayed champion of human values. When shall we emphasize to the world that Jesus is its light and its life, that only through Him can come emancipation from everything that hampers growth of brotherhood? This is the function of His Church.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> W. E. Blackburn, *Christ shows the Way*, 22.

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## The Eighth Commandment.

BY THE REVEREND A. E. GARVIE, M.A., D.D., D.TH., LONDON.

THE basis of society in the Hebrew nation was *theocratic* and not *sociocratic*; moral obligations were recognized as divine commands, and the sanction was the authority of God and not of the

State. In the second group of the Decalogue, dealing with man's relation to his fellows, there is a progressiveness in the demands made. The bond of the family comes before any general social

obligations ; the preservation of life comes before the protection of marriage ; and these claims are more primitive than the assertion of the rights of property. Such a command as, 'Thou shalt not steal' assumes a more developed society, and even a more advanced economic order than the three preceding commands do. None of these three natural relations, and the obligations they involve, seems to need vindication as do the rights of property here assumed ; and to offer this vindication must be our first task.

(1) Man creates nothing ; God alone is Creator ; God provides the material objects, which man appropriates, applies, and adapts to meet his physical necessities. It is God who sends the sunshine and the showers which make the earth fruitful. But man can make his own, use and enjoy only by his labour what God gives. Our Lord saw God's care and bounty towards all His creatures in the feeding of the birds of the air and the clothing of the flowers of the field ; but in forbidding anxiety, and requiring trust in the Heavenly Father, He was not denying the need, or depreciating the value of human labour ; for His parables show how constant and varied was His interest in the works of men in the home, the field, the sea (Mt 6<sup>25-34</sup>). But if 'the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof ; the world, and they that dwell therein' (Ps 24<sup>1</sup>), how can man claim to possess anything as his own, as his exclusive property ?

(2) The fact of man's labour affords one answer. It has been generally maintained that a man has a right to claim as his property that with which he has 'mixed his labour' ; a hunter may keep the game he has killed, a farmer the crops he has raised, a shepherd the sheep he has tended. But this at once raises a problem. As long as there is land enough in which to hunt, to till, or to graze sheep, difficulty need not arise ; but if the natural provision is falling short of the human demands, exclusive possession by one man means privation imposed on others. There arise quarrels and even fightings between rival claimants (cf. Gn 26<sup>18-22</sup>) ; in an early stage of social development might was right ; what was seized was held by the stronger hand. As there was progress, differences got adjusted, and exclusive possession was recognized and protected by law. Property as exclusive legally recognized possession of wealth—the material objects which meet human needs, or gratify human desires—may be transferred to another in exchange of services or goods, or by gift or bequest ; in many countries some payment has to be made to

the State in recognition that the community gives to possession its security, as well as that in a civilized society no wealth is merely an individual product, but always due to co-operation with others. The ground on which many moralists condemn betting and gambling is that the transfer of wealth here has not the moral justification of advantageous exchange of goods or services, or of a voluntary expression of interest or affection in gift or bequest.

(3) It is quite evident that there is now very little wealth in a civilized society that is held for the reason that the owner has himself bestowed such labour on material objects as to give them their value for human use. But the stability of a society now requires that present possession be legally recognized and protected, unless it can be proved that it was acquired, not in the remote past but the immediate present, by force, falsehood, or fraud ; and then restitution may be required. Just as for the two reasons already suggested, the transfer of wealth may be taxed, so also the consideration of the common good may override the individual claim, and the community, through its appropriate organ the State, may take possession of private property with compensation to the owner. As it is society which guarantees and preserves the possession, so society may determine the conditions of ownership, to prevent abuse and to promote the use, which the general interest demands. Among peasantry in some countries, with whom ancient traditions and customs survive long after they have been forgotten by city-dwellers, the old justification for property reappears in a distinction as regards moral wrong between reaping part of a field, and taking crops already reaped, felling a tree and carrying away wood already cut. It may here be stated generally that till recently, in most countries the rights of property have been protected against the demands of humanity ; and if existing distress and discontent are to be removed, and righteousness in social relations is to be done, the State will need to intervene much more energetically than it has done to prevent the abuse of private property to public injury, and to allow such use only as is consistent with justice to all.

(4) Before pursuing this principle further, however, it is necessary to consider a moral justification for private property which has been advanced by idealists. Man is embodied spirit, or inspired body, and through his body he is related to the material universe, dependent on it for his physical safety and satisfaction ; but he has a spiritual relation to it also ; it is by understanding Nature's

laws that he can control Nature's forces to prevent injury or to promote benefit to himself ; and this inquiry he can carry beyond all utilitarian ends to a disinterested pursuit of truth ; he can appreciate and imitate Nature's beauty ; in his efforts, individual and in co-operation with others, thus to subdue Nature for the common human good, he develops moral qualities and social relations ; it is not apart from, but in relation to the material universe that he advances in culture and civilization. He can thus expand his personality in putting Nature to his human uses ; he can maintain his independence, preserve himself from anxiety regarding his provision for future needs, find leisure for realizing his ideals, only as by an adequate possession of material goods he can be assured of his physical safety and satisfaction. Man's creative genius impels him to realize himself, not in his own personality alone, but in the world around him, the holding and shaping of things to his heart's desire. This *sounds* ideal, but it *is not* actual. As regards many of the *haves* it is an illusion, as regards the *have-nots* it is a mockery. The distribution of wealth to-day is such that at the one end of the scale there is a soul-destroying luxury, at the other a no less soul-destroying poverty. That in each class there are many, and among the poor probably more proportionately than among the rich, who rise above their circumstances, and realize their personality according to God's purpose, does not disprove the tendency, in abundance or in penury, to deteriorate and not develop manhood. Our Lord Himself regarded riches as more dangerous to the life which is life indeed, than poverty (Mt 19<sup>23, 24</sup>, Lk 6<sup>20, 21</sup> 16<sup>19-20</sup>). What is certain, however, is that the Heavenly Father meant all His children to be fed, clothed, sheltered, cared for, comforted, so that there would be no need of 'carking care' for any one of them (Mt 25<sup>31-46</sup>). The economic system of to-day, in our and other industrialized lands, and the social order which tolerates it, is an arrogant and defiant challenge of the divine purpose for the common human good.

(5) We must thus recognize that the society for the guidance of which this commandment was given was a much simpler one, in which the unity of the family and the solidarity of the tribe left relatively few unprovided for, and unprotected by the narrower or the wider community, and in which the problems of the distribution of wealth were not as acute as in our own day. We must have this economic and social background as we look more closely at the prohibition of theft. It is not neces-

sary to waste words on obvious transgressions of the commandment by the highwayman, the burglar, the pickpocket—these offences against the Law deserve punishment ; but in assigning it account should be taken of the circumstances, the character, and the future possibilities of the thief. A starving man who steals a loaf, a father who is driven by the wants of his family to some fraud, a youth who can find no employment, and wants to relieve his family of a burden and breaks into a shop—these must all be punished, it may be, but far less guilty are they than the suburban woman who, without need, makes a practice of shop-lifting ; and how many magistrates measure the legal penalty by the moral offence ? This is not the place in which to discuss the large subject of penal reform ; but not retribution or deterrence only should be regarded as the end of punishment, but reformation also. So far as theft is due, not to sheer wickedness, but to social wrong inflicted on the wrong-doer, by defect in the economic system, which withholds from a man the means of living, or even the chance of earning his living, society itself is the transgressor.

(6) But the prohibition 'Thou shalt not steal' has a much wider application to many moral offences, not all of which are so regarded. The company promoter, who issues a prospectus, which promises profits which can never be realized, and which there is no intention to make the effort to realize ; the speculator in the stock-exchange 'bear' or 'bull' who manipulates the price of shares in his own interest with no regard to the actual condition of the company involved ; the employer who pays his employees less than their labours are worth to him, taking advantage of their poverty, their dread of unemployment, or their helplessness because not protected by a trade union ; the tradesman who puts in inferior material and work than he has undertaken to supply ; the shopkeeper, who pretends that his goods are more valuable than the price he asks for them ; the shopper who visits a shop only for bargains at a sale, and withholds her custom at other times ; the government which inflates or deflates the currency for a party advantage, regardless of the effect on the community generally,—all these are, even if common custom condones any of their practices, *stealing* ; they are gaining a personal advantage at a loss to others. Even the art of advertising and salesmanship, as widely practised in America—of getting people to buy goods that they did not need, and did not want until persuaded that they should want, because they needed them—is dishonest business.

In my judgment betting and gambling are also *theft*, a transfer of wealth without a proper equivalent in goods, services, or personal relations. It may not be possible to make all these offences crimes; but they should fall under moral condemnation. Many Christians need to have much more sensitive consciences; and most churches need to hold a much higher standard of conduct in these matters before their members and their community.

(7) Before we can suggest the Christian remedies we must more accurately diagnose the disease. Jesus affirmed that 'ye cannot serve God and mammon' (Mt 6<sup>24</sup>); the desire for worldly possessions is a deep-rooted and strong passion. Men want to possess far beyond their necessities, comforts and luxuries even, for wealth gives social rank and influence, power to keep others in dependence, and so exercise an arbitrary control over them. Possession for rank or power is desired long after the need of possession for use has been more than satisfied. A far larger number are forced into the service of Mammon by anxiety for the supply of the necessities of self and others; family affection and solicitude may impose this bondage to gain the daily bread. Men live and labour in what has been truly described as 'an acquisitive society,' an economic system, in which self-interest is the too dominant motive, and competition the too prevalent method. Not only do its victims suffer physically and even often morally from 'the struggle for existence,' but even the victors have often to pay the price of a moral deterioration, of which many are still unaware, but of which a growing number are becoming sensitively conscious. 'Business is business' means for some Christian men, that they would be 'down and out' themselves, if they did not acquiesce in, not necessarily dishonest, but certainly harsh and cruel practices. If they tried to carry out the Golden Rule they feel that bankruptcy would be the result. Sometimes, if they did not lower wages, or dismiss some of their workers, they could not hold their own in the ruthless competition. All business is not as bad as that, but a great deal is. Mammon is a tyrannous master.

(8) For this morally dangerous situation in which the eighth commandment in its present applications is being widely disregarded the main reason is, that man's scientific and industrial progress has outrun his moral development. 'Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers.' In morality which is not concerned solely with abstract general principles, but also with concrete particular instances, there must be a constantly fresh inter-

pretation and application of those principles to these instances as the circumstances make new demands. For the regulation of the economic system ethical principles in relevant interpretation and application are necessary; and Christian moralists have lagged behind in their reading of 'the signs of the times,' and have not developed a Christian ethic that will afford sure guidance. Not only so, but the application of ethical principles in the economic sphere has been challenged; in popular language the objection is worded; 'Business is business,' in more academic terms, 'the economic sphere is autonomous.' My space allows me to make only two remarks for which I could offer full justification. In the economic, as in every other sphere, there are regular sequences of cause and effect, actions have their inevitable consequences; but on closer scrutiny we discover that as in this sphere we are dealing with material objects on the one hand, and human activities on the other, such laws as there are can all be resolved into physical limitations, or psychic tendencies; of this reflexion the law of supply and demand offers a convincing illustration. These psychic tendencies—desires, motives, interests, purposes, actions—are all, as human, subject to moral law; as in all human life so in his making and using, selling and buying of material objects man is under moral obligations. The Christian Church has some responsibility not only for being so tardy in furnishing the relevant moral standard, but also for being so timid in proclaiming it, and exercising its authority in God's name to get it accepted and observed. While Lutheranism acquiesced in a dualism of the realm of grace and the social region, Calvinism aimed at bringing the whole of human life, individual and corporate, under the law of God, and as long as the Calvinistic churches maintained their discipline of the members, the authority of God's law was asserted. It was during last century that the churches abrogated their authority; and the tyranny of *individualism* with the consequent anarchy of *laissez-faire* became prevalent and dominant, with the inevitable result in the dangers and the difficulties of the present world-wide crisis.

(9) What, then, are some of the principles which the Church should proclaim? *First of all*, in face of the mechanization and materialization of human labour and life, which man's increased wealth due to his control over physical forces, and the resulting increasing productivity of modern methods of industry have brought about, it should proclaim that 'man doth not live by bread only, but by

every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord' (Dt 8<sup>3</sup>, Mt 4<sup>4</sup>), and that 'a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth' (Lk 12<sup>15</sup>). Things and not persons are 'in the saddle' and hold the reins in the highly civilized communities. 'Plain living and high thinking,' not the converse, is the truth for the times; culture as the *worth* of mind should be master over civilization as the *wealth* of matter.

*Secondly*, the Golden Rule: 'all things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets' (Mt 7<sup>12</sup>)—this law of justice or righteousness, which is still less than the law of love, should be asserted; it is the *minimum*, not the *maximum*, demand on the Christian in all his relations with his fellows, including the economic.

*Thirdly*, Jesus' teaching about God's care for man's bodily needs (Mt 6<sup>25-34</sup>), His example in healing as well as preaching, His standard for the judgment of the nations (Mt 25<sup>31-46</sup>) enforced as it is by His 'inasmuch' are surely a threefold cord which cannot be broken, binding the care of the body on the Christian conscience.

*Fourthly*, although owing to the economic conditions of His environment and age this care of the body was illustrated by instances of individual philanthropy, yet as Jesus was no legislator for a society such as Mohammed was, but left His Church the guidance of the Spirit under changed conditions, individual philanthropy may be quite inadequate to fulfil the obligation imposed. And it was under the guidance of the Spirit that during last century there developed, not instead of philanthropy which is still urgently needed, but as its necessary complement, to accomplish what it could not achieve, what has been called *social politics*, the provision by the community of a number of social services, the range of which is still expanding, where individual effort would be less efficient and less economical, even if at all practicable. A further step is now finding its advocates. The individualist, *laissez-faire* economic system has 'failed to deliver the goods' as the present crisis shows, that is, it has proved economically unsound, because, as some moralists have been proclaiming to deaf ears, till recently morally wrong in its dominant motive self-interest and its prevalent method competition; and any remedies which it has applied to itself have failed to cure its malignant disease. Some are advocating *collectivism*, not the abolition of private property for use, but the possession and control of

the means of production—capital—by the community, local or national. I am not prepared to commit myself to this general principle, as such a sudden change might prove a disastrous revolution, and wiser socialists do admit 'the inevitableness of gradualness.' It seems to me, however, unwise to commit oneself unreservedly to an abstract principle, instead of leaving oneself free to judge what is best on each occasion, when some change is needed. I believe also in individual liberty, responsibility, initiative, and enterprise as a factor in economic as in all social developments worth preserving, so far as the interests of the community allow. To describe collectivist proposals, so long as just compensation is made, as theft, robbery, plunder, a violation of the commandment we are considering is sheer nonsense; as the rights of private property are not absolute, but always subject to the wider and higher interests of the common good. Wherever and whenever a necessary industry becomes a private monopoly, exploited for private gain at the loss of the community, some control, and if to that end necessary some possession, by the community is just and righteous. For by this change we are removing the occasion of, or the excuse for, a breach of the commandments.

*Lastly*, beyond the Golden Rule there is the law of love, which is in the strict use of language no law, but rather a motive, a disposition, a habit, a principle of manifold application, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' (Mt 22<sup>39</sup>). This commandment Jesus illustrates in the parables of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10<sup>30-37</sup>), the Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk 16<sup>19-26</sup>) and the Sheep and the Goats (Mt 25<sup>31-46</sup>). The supreme instance and motive is His confession. 'The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many' (Mt 20<sup>28</sup>). He did not measure His intentions by His expectations from others, for love goes beyond even the Golden Rule, and He even in His love went beyond the law of love, equal for self and neighbour, for He gave His life to save all men. Paul, after reciting some of the commandments, offers the comment: 'Love worketh no ill to his neighbour' (Ro 13<sup>10</sup>); that may be the fulfilment of the Law as prohibition; it is not love's own fulfilment as service and sacrifice. To withhold benefit is often to inflict injury. To deprive any man of the provision God as Father makes for the needs of all His children by any abuse of the rights of property is from the standpoint of Christian love a violation of the eighth commandment.