

of the assassins of Belgrade, for we do not succeed in keeping perfect order, or in punishing all crimes of violence at home. We have our race difficulties, as well as the czar, and there isn't so very much to choose between an American mob dealing with negroes, and a Messarabian mob dealing with Jews, except that the czar's subjects do murder by wholesale, and our lynchers as yet usually confine their attentions to individuals. As for the killing at Belgrade, it seems to be a time-honored custom in Servia to kill the king, if possible, when it is time for a political change, just as it is the custom in the mountains of Kentucky and Tennessee to shoot the sheriff and as many of his relations as can be sighted when occasion seems to invite. They certainly needed a change of kings in Servia, and certainly they need a change of habits in Breathitt.—Editorial in Life, of July 2.

#### THE NATURE OF MONOPOLY.

A portion of a sermon delivered at the Vine Street Congregational church, Cincinnati, June 28, by Herbert S. Bigelow.

Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his.—Hab. 2:6.

The day is passed 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 recreant 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 did 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 has paid four dollars and a half for board. Imagine the "freedom" of paying for clothes, and dentists' and doctors' bills, and street car fare, 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 20 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 such food and housing as workingmen 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 to-day 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 jail.

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 15 years the land value 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.