

## Canterbury's Leadership

**D**R. WILLIAM TEMPLE, newly chosen Archbishop of Canterbury, holds that while the Established Church should state its principles regarding economic questions it is not obliged to draw up policies.

He says that "no depth of piety or range of theological learning would help any man to say what effect an increase in the bank rate would produce." This, of course, is true, but an acquaintance with the fundamentals of political economy and an understanding of the operations of Natural Law would help.

That the Archbishop has more than a little of such acquaintance and understanding is indicated by his sound position in the matter of land. In his book, "Christianity and the Social Order," he writes:

"The fundamental source of all wealth is land. All wealth is a product of human labor expended upon God's gifts; and those gifts are bestowed in the land, what it contains and what it nourishes.

"The primary necessities of life, bountifully supplied by nature, are Air, Sunshine, Land and Water. No one claims to own the first two, or to exclude others from them except on condition of paying a fee.

"The old principle that justifiable property is a right of administration and not a right to exclusive use should certainly be applied to the other two."

The Archbishop analyzes the situation correctly when he continues:

"But a great deal of what is amiss alike in rural and in urban areas could be remedied by the taxation of the value of sites as distinct from the buildings erected upon them.

"In this field, that inversion of the nat-

ural order which is characteristic of our whole modern life is especially important. If house property is improved (a social service) the rates are raised and the improvement is penalized; if it is allowed to deteriorate (a social injury) the rateable value is reduced and the offending landlord is relieved.

"Taxation of the value of sites, as distinct from the building erected upon them, would encourage the full utilization of the land. . . Land values, therefore, should be taxed and rated; houses might well be de-rated."

The primate is on less solid ground, however, when he advocates, as a measure of post-war economic reconstruction, that no shareholder of a company be permitted to draw out in dividends more than his original investment, and when he contends that fixed interest securities are more moral than equities.

Interest, which is payment for the use of capital, is justifiable just as long as and to the extent that capital aids in production. These conditions met, the return should be limited neither as to time nor amount. Moreover, whether the capital is lent, which would make the investor the holder of a fixed interest security, or whether it is used to purchase a partnership in the business, which would make the investor an equity holder, should have absolutely no bearing in the matter.

But the very fact that this distinguished Christian leader has devoted much thought to the fundamental economic questions of the day, and has achieved such a large measure of profundity upon them, is an augury of responsible leadership in England and the world.

C. O. Steele.