

PRACTICAL PAPERS.

CAPITAL AND LABOR.

There is much talk, of late, about capital and labor, and their relations. Sometimes there is talk about a conflict between them and a tyranny of one over the other, as if they were persons, or as if they were parties in the commonwealth.

In strict propriety of speech, all discussions about those two words, abstractly taken, belong to the science of political economy—not at all to the science of morals or duty. "Capital" and "Labor" are two of the three factors in the production of wealth or value; and when problems in political economy are under consideration it is convenient to use those terms abstractly. Capital can do nothing without giving employment to labor; and labor can do nothing without materials, tools and subsistence, which are what political economy calls capital. Of the remaining factor in the creation of wealth, it is only necessary to say that "Land" is indispensable not only to agriculture but also to commerce, which must have ground for warehouses and wharves, and to every manufacture, which must have ground for mills and workshops. The wealth produced—or, what is the same thing, the value created—is distributed, under the operation of certain natural laws, among these three factors. Land has done its part in the creation of the value, and its share in the product of what the economists call *rent*. The share of labor is called *wages*. What falls to the share of capital is called *profits*. If a farmer owns the land which he cultivates; if his tools and cattle, his seeds, and the subsistence for himself and his family, are at his command without borrowing, and if all the labor is performed by himself and his wife and children, he has no occasion to inquire how much of the product should be called rent or how much is wages or profit, for there is no distribution in the case. But if the farmer raises his crop on another man's land, and if he obtains all the means of production from a third party, the total value produced must be divided among the three, and the distribution will be effected by the operation of certain principles which political economy undertakes to explain and define.

Chemistry has nothing to say about justice or injustice in the combination of two elements for the production of carbonic acid—nothing about the rights or the tyranny of oxygen—nothing about the wrongs endured by carbon in the process of combustion; all that it knows is that the combination of these two elements is combustion and that the product is carbonic acid. Just as little does political economy know about the relative rights or mutual wrongs of labor and capital. And really, in the sense in which that science uses those words, neither capital nor labor has, or can have, any moral quality. A bushel of seed corn has no rights, and can neither do nor suffer wrong. So of a day's work, whether eight hours or ten. But the owner of the seed corn has a right in it which may be violated, and which society ought to protect—a right which it is in his power to abuse, and for the abuse of which he is responsible. So the owner of the day's work—or, in one word, the laborer—has rights which society ought carefully to guard, rights which it is in his power to abuse, rights which imply duties and responsibility. When we begin to talk about rights and wrongs, tyranny and degradation, let us remember that we are not talking about such abstractions as capital and labor, but about human beings in those relations of mutual dependence and duty which constitute society—the family, the neighborhood, the commonwealth.

We deceive ourselves if we think that the great social question of our nineteenth-century civilization—the question which emerges in trades-unions, strikes, riots, and schemes for the reconstruction of society—is nothing but a question in political economy, a question about labor and capital. It is a question about human beings with human wants and sufferings, human affections, human joys and griefs, human capabilities and human relations both to this world and to the world unseen. It transcends the axioms and demonstrations of political economy. It is much more than a question about the relations of this and that factor in the creation of values. It is a question concerning the scope and application of that divine law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" the golden rule, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do you even so to them." Illustrations of

the golden rule and of the divine law may be gathered many and luminous—from the field of political economy; but the social question of our time is one which political economy, without light and aid from a higher sphere of knowledge, can never solve. Let the economists, from Adam Smith to our own Walker, hold forth their own light, and let us be thankful for all the light they give us; but never let us forget that the true solution must be found at last in Christ's story of the Good Samaritan, and in Christ's picture of the Final Judgment. The Christian principles and precepts which Paul gives us (see Rom. xii.), and which men are so prone to forget while they wrangle over matters of "doubtful disputation," the loving spirit which glows through the Epistles of John—the philanthropy which draws its inspiration from that stupendous fact, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son"—these leaves of the tree of life are "for the healing of the nations;" and without these the growing malady of our modern civilization is immedicable.

Perhaps I may resume this subject in another paper. But I must not send this on its errand without entreating every reader to remember that the duty of paying the market price for labor, or for whatever is a product of labor, is not the whole duty of man. Duty is obedience to God; and "Thy commandment is exceeding broad!" The duty of the men who employ labor to the men whom they employ; the duty of those who have abundance to those who have little as well as to those who have nothing; the duty of neighbor to neighbor; duty measured not by contract nor by human statute, but by the law of love; duty such as the Good Samaritan paid to the man who had fallen among thieves; duty enforced not by power from without but by impulse from within—is more than can be expressed in terms of money.—*Rev. L. Bacon, D.D., in N.Y. Christian Union.*

THE REMEDY FOR HARD TIMES.

We can point out, beyond a question, the most efficacious remedies for our national disorder. *Industry* is the basis of all prosperity, individual and public. Wealth—all the means of support, comfort, and elegance—must be derived from the culture of the soil, the manufacture of the products of the earth into forms and combinations adapting them to purposes of usefulness and taste, or transporting them to places where their value will be enhanced. The cultivation of the earth, manufactures, and commerce are the only real sources of financial prosperity; and these arts can be successfully prosecuted only by toil and industry. It is the law of heaven that man must live by the sweat of his brow. The attempt to evade this necessity is certainly one cause of the hard times. Multitudes are endeavoring to live by the toil of others, by easy occupations, or by their wits and tricks. Not a few find it more pleasant, if not more respectable, to live by begging than by digging. Employment, adapted to both sexes and all classes of persons, is the necessity of the age; and only by its diligent prosecution can prosperity be secured.

Industry alone cannot insure good times. *Judicious management* is needed to render labor valuable. Thousands labor to very little purpose. Many engage in pursuits for which they are not fitted; others cultivate sterile land, which cannot remunerate their toil; and not a few waste their time, means, and labor in visionary schemes. There is wisdom in the common adage: "The shoemaker should stick to his last." Men should learn some useful trade or business; and, having learned it, follow it with diligence and perseverance. Millions are every year wasted in ill-advised schemes and unprofitable pursuits. If men lack experience, they should avail themselves of the counsel of their prosperous neighbors. There is practical wisdom in the words of Solomon: "Every purpose is established by counsel; and with good advice make war."

Economy is a first-rate prescription for hard times. "Waste makes want," is an old adage, whose truth is constantly verified before our eyes. No industry and no management can secure prosperity, if there be extravagance and waste. Men should spend less than they make, and, if necessary, exercise forethought, economy, and self-denial, to keep their expenditure within their incomes. By the neglect of this simple rule, multitudes are reduced to bankruptcy, defraud their creditors, and become a burden on society. Economy secures individual prosperity, and the public welfare is but the aggregate of individual success.

Avoiding unnecessary debts is essential to individual and to public prosperity. Debts may be wisely and profitably contracted; but they are so contracted only when investments are judicious, and safe arrangements are made for the payment of the debts. The reckless incurring of debts, without the intention of paying them, or, at least, without well considered arrangements for doing so, is one of the great evils of the age. Debts and hard times are nearly allied. From the day of Solomon to our time, "the borrower" has been "servant to the lender." Debts, injudiciously contracted, are a sad barrier to success in life, and one of the chief causes of hard times. If men would apply a remedy to the malady, they must be wary of contracting debts, punctual in paying them, and, if misfortune prevents their payment, honest in rendering an account of their assets and the causes of their failure.

Another means of softening the hardness of the times is *liberality* on the part of those who are less affected by them. In the hardest times, there are some who by their foresight, their fortunate occupation, or their favoring circumstances, are freed, in a measure at least, from the general pressure. They have a noble opportunity for usefulness. They may deal leniently with their debtors, furnish remunerative employment for the poor, aid those who are honestly struggling with adversity, and contribute of their means to feed the hungry. Liberality need not be limited to the prosperous. All, not in abject poverty, may contribute, according to their means, to lighten the public burdens, and to encourage and assist individuals in their struggles to supply their own wants.

Pity is a most important means of mitigating the evils of hard times. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is." They that "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," shall have all the needed things of this life added unto them. Godliness includes the very qualities which ordinarily insure success in the world—temperance, prudence, industry, and perseverance. It, moreover, secures the divine blessing, which maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow with it.

Christians are called, in troublous times, not to creaking or despondency, but to a courageous resistance to the prevalent evils. They should show themselves men, "diligent in business" as well as "fervent in spirit." Whoever may be idle and worthless they should not be. Christianity looks with no toleration on the indolent. "This we command you," says Paul, "that if any would not work, neither should they eat."—*Richmond Religious Herald.*

SOOT AS A MANURE.

The value of soot, like that of ashes, depends a great deal upon the material that made it. That produced from a wood fire is the best; but there is so little of it that it is hardly worth while to consider it. The burning of coal, however, produces a great deal of soot, and its value is such that it would pay to save and apply all that is produced. Coal soot contains a fair percentage of ammonia, besides some phosphates, potash, soda, magnesia, sulphates, carbonates, and chloride of lime. Sulphate of ammonia and sulphate of lime are the ingredients of most value, particularly the former. It is used on all kinds of crops, and the testimony, though variable, is strongly in its favour. The amount that would be useful depends upon circumstances, but one can scarcely apply too much. From ten to twenty bushels per acre is enough, perhaps. In England soot has long been a favorite fertilizer for wheat and as a top-dressing for grass lands. Mixed with salt, the effect is said to be greatly increased. In one experiment recorded the soil without any manure produces 157 bushels of potatoes; with thirty bushels of soot the yield was increased to 192 bushels; and with thirty bushels of soot mixed with eight bushels of salt 240 bushels were produced. Grass and wheat top-dressed with soot have a beautiful green color, due principally to the sulphate of ammonia present. For garden purposes nothing is better than soot dissolved in water—half a peck to a barrel of water—the plants and beds being sprinkled with it. Moisture increases its value, and, hence, its best effects are seen on moist soils or in moist seasons.—*Journal of Chemistry.*

THE province of reason as to matters of religion is the same as that of the eye in reference to the external world: not to create objects, nor to sit in judgment on the propriety of their existence, but simply to discern them just as they are.—*Tryon Edwards.*