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Series IV: Sermons, 1914-1963, undated.

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Poverty, 1918.

POVERTY

If I were asked to characterize the social problem, I would say that it is the problem of poverty and if I were asked for a solution X~~8~~ of the social problem I would say that it is the abolition of poverty. But by the term poverty I would mean more than is usually connoted by it. It would emphasize the scarcity of spiritual more than that of material means of subsistence, the deficiency in the needs of the soul more than in the wants of the body. What is this social problem that cries for slution at the hands of our civilization? It is the problem of conserving, vitalizing and propogating the highest social ideals and values. What are the great institutions of life around which these ideals and values centre? Evidently the home, the state, both in its political and in its economic aspects, and the individual. What is wrong with the home? What is the problem of the family? The fast disappearing ideal of sanctity which hallowed it in the past! The sentiments of love, purity and reverence which are being driven from the eharths by the furies of materialism and commercialism. In a word, - poverty - the dearth of spiritual values. What is wrong with the political and economic institutions of our government? The absence of the motive of patriotism in our political life and that of altruism in our economic order! Poverty in spiritual stimuli or impulses! And the soul of the individual, what is wrong with it? Why, it, too, has been starved in the penury of holy passions! It has been deprived of the sacred wells of salvation! It is ^{poor,} pinched and hungered and destitute!

It follows, therefore, that the social problem is essentially a spiritual problem. Spiritual pverty, in a word, is the prime cause of our civilization's weakness and invirility. It calls for the accentuation of existing spiritual ideals or for the introduction of new ones in order to replenish the abject poverty of the social soul and of the individual souls with the wealth and glory of strong moral emotions. For this and in this alone lies the hope of our culture and civilization. But in setting out upon the performance of this task we must remember that we cannot rear a temple of spiritual grandeur upon a foundation

of physical poverty, that the soul of man as well as the collective soul of the group will not respond to the appeals of the finer things in life as long as the body is racked by material want and privation. The Man with the Hoe whom want has chained to the clods of dirt and whose soul has become one with that of the beast of the field can no more appreciate the finer realities of life than the blind man can thrill at the ineffable mystery of a wonderful dawn. The man who labors in grimy sweat from morning dark to evening gloom in the dark damp holes of the earth, whose soul has been crushed by the weight of constant want, can no more hear the call of the more perfect life than the deaf one can hear the heavenly symphony of a winged choir. The poor man will be whipped into a materialistic conception of life because the driving wants of his body will monopolize all the energy of his soul. He who must grub forever in the dirt of the earth for mere subsistence has no time to admire the splendor of the skies.

If you want a new soul in man you must give him a new body. If you want spiritual fervor and emotion in man's soul you must provide him with the immediate needs of his body. Physical want and spiritual plenty are incompatible.

Some religions and ethical systems have looked with extreme favor upon poverty. They held that man's soul would be enriched in proportion to its detachment from the demands of ^{active} daily life. The more a man will strip himself free of wordly possessions the more glorious ~~XXXX~~ will be the raiments in which his soul will be decked. Hence the cynics, the hermits, the ascetics, the monks and the whole school of thought that has come to look upon poverty as something sacred, in itself something worthy of admiration. Now the fact of the matter is that poverty is as great a danger to the spiritual life of man as great wealth is; that the empty stomach is as sure to starve the soul as the crammed man will choke it in obesity.

It was very fortunate for the civilization of Europe that it did not take this doctrine of poverty which early Christianity preached too seriously, and applied it to its social life. Peoples who have always been poor have never produced great art or literature or science. The backward races ^{and} ~~or~~ people^s

of the world today are such as live from hand to mouth. For true culture and civilization a certain degree of comfort and leisure is required, a respite from physical toil, and a reservance of energy for spiritual pursuits.

Gilbert K. Chesterton defines a poor man as "a man who has not got more much money", and insists that there is no need to study the psychology of poverty than to study the psychology of bad temper. But, Chesterton notwithstanding, there is a psychology of poverty. The definition of the poor man as one who has not got much money is incomplete for it does not take into account the effect of this lack of money upon the soul, upon the whole world-outlook of the poor man. The greatest tragedies which poverty enacts in the life of the world are not those of broken bodies but of broken souls.

It is true that some very poor men have become very great. But poverty was no more the cause of their greatness than was the wealth of those who were great - and rich. The exceptional man - the genius - will be great in spite of all poverty, ailments or deformities in life. For he is in possession of that living fire that can purge life of all its dross, that can forge a paradise out of chaos and bring sunshine out of Stygian gloom. But we speak of the average man and not of the superman; and the morals status of society is ultimately that of group values and group standards.

Poverty is an ever-present menace to culture and civilization; for poverty makes men greedy just as hunger makes of men gluttons. Poverty makes idols of gold; it enthrones wealth; it makes material possessions the goal and objective in life. Man worships money because all the suffering in his life was caused by the lack of it.

Poverty is the foe of a truly spiritual religion. The poor man, deprived in this world of his physical wants, creates for himself another world - a heaven full of all physical joys. God himself is relegated to the position of a universal paying-teller, returning so much in joy and comfort for every good deed that is turned in. Religions that appeal to the masses play upon these crude yearnings and cravings of the ignorant poor.

Poverty is the foe of democracy for poverty spells ignorance and ig-

norance means lack of opportunity and lack of opportunity means slavery. The hope of democracy lies in the education of the masses and poverty makes this impossible.

Moreover, a constitution must be backed by the full dinner pail or it will be destroyed. There is an ever-lurking threat, a muffled thunder, a concealed hate, a grumbling volcano in poverty. No stable government can even be founded upon such unrest. In a word - no idealism in our life is possible as long as the poor in vast numbers are with us.

But the converse is equally true - the poor will always be with us as long as idealism does not permeate our social being. Men have from time immemorial advocated ways and means for the abolition of poverty. Men have suggested new forms of economic organization, new political institutions, new machinery of government to solve the problem of poverty. The socialist, the communist, the re-single-taxer, all have plans for economic organization. There is, of course, vast truth in all of them. But their greatest short-coming is their absolute, almost child-like faith in external machinery, in legal contrivances, in mechanical devices to bring about a proper adjustment in society. They do not deal with the personal equation. They do not take into ~~account~~ account the individual, the man of passions, prejudices and proclivities. They wish to heal the body of society without first curing its soul. They fail to see that the

(incomplete)

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THE ROGERS

ABSOLUTELY FIRE PROOF
EUROPEAN PLAN
EVERY ROOM WITH PRIVATE BATH.

W. D. FULMER,
MANAGER.

WHEELING, W. VA.

Poverty

If I were asked to characterize the Social Problem I would say that it is the problem of Poverty and if I were asked for a solution of the Social Problem I would say that it lies in the abolition of poverty. But by ^{the term} poverty I would mean more than is usually connoted by ~~the term~~. It would ^{emphasize} the scarcity of spiritual ~~more than~~ ^{the} material means of subsistence, ~~the~~ deficiency in the needs of the soul ^{more than} ~~as much as~~ in the wants of the body. What is this social problem that cries for solution at the hands of our civilization?

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2.

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It is the problem of conserving, ~~and~~ ^{vitalizing} and propagating the highest social ideals and values. What are the great institutions of life around which these ideals and values ~~are~~ ^{center}? Evidently ~~the home~~ ^{the home}, the state both in its ~~political~~ ^{political} and in its economic ~~and social~~ ^{and social} aspects, and the ~~individual~~ ^{individual}. What's wrong with the home? What is the problem of the family? The ~~fast-disappearing~~ ^{ideals} ~~atmosphere~~ of sanctity which hallowed it in the past! The sentiments of love, ~~reverence~~ ^{piety and} reverence which are being driven from the hearths by the ~~forces~~ ^{forces} of materialism and commercialism. In a word - poverty - the

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3.

death of spiritual values. What's
wrong with the political and
economic institutions of our
government? The absence of the
^{uplifting} patriotism in our political
life and that of altruism
in our economic order!
Poverty in spiritual stimuli
or impulses! And the soul
of the individual what's wrong
with it? Why it too, has been
starved in the pining of holy
passions! It has been deprived
of the sacred wells of salva-
tion! It is ^{pinched} ~~poor~~ ^{starved} ~~poor~~ ^{hungered} ~~poor~~
destitute! ~~Poverty is the~~
~~social problem~~
~~it follows, therefore, that~~
The Social Problem is ^{essentially} ~~there~~
in essence, a spiritual problem.

spiritual poverty, in ~~the~~ a word, is the
prime cause of ^{intellectual} ~~our~~ weakness and
inimicity.



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4.

It calls for
~~consistencies~~ in the accentuation
of existing spiritual ideals
or ~~for~~ the introduction of new
ones ~~into the social life~~
~~meet the changed conditions~~
~~life~~ in order to ^{replenish} ~~abate~~ the
abject poverty of the social
and the individual souls
~~and to replenish them~~ with
the wealth and the glory
of ^{strong} moral emotions. For this
and in this alone lies the
hope of our ^{culture and} civilization.
But in setting out upon the
performance of this task
we must remember
that we cannot rear a
~~the~~ Temple of spiritual
grandeur upon a founda-

It ^{demonstrates} ~~is the~~ ~~problem of~~ spiritual per-
fectibility.



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5.

tion of physical poverty, that
the soul of man as well
as the collector's soul ^{the group} ~~the group~~
will not respond to the appeals
of the finer things in life as
long as the body is racked
by ~~for~~ material want and
privation. The man with the
hoe whom want has chained
to the clods of dirt and
whose soul ~~has become one~~ ^{has become one} with that
of the heart of the field ^{can} ~~will~~
no more appreciate the
finer realities of life than
the blind man can thrill
at the ineffable mystery
of a wonderful dawn.
The man who labors
in grimy sweat from

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6.

morning dark to evening
gloom in the dark, ~~holes~~ damp
holes of the earth ~~and~~
~~more~~ ~~feel~~ the call whose
word has been crushed
by the weight of constant
want, and no more was
the call of the ^{more} perfect life
than the deaf one can
hear the heavenly sympho-
ny of ~~the~~ ^a wondrous choir.
The poor man will ^{be whipped} ~~be~~
^{into} ~~be~~ a materialistic
^{conception of life}
because the driving want
of his body will monopo-
lize all the energy of his
soul. He who must grub
forever in the dirt of the
earth for mere subsistence

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has no time to admire the
~~evening~~ splendor of the
skies. ~~(over)~~

If you want a new soul in
man you must give him a
new body. If you want spiritual
 fervor and ~~bliss~~ in man's
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Some religions and ethical
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the demands of active daily
life. The more a ^{man} ~~man~~
will strip himself ~~from~~ ^{free}
of worldly possessions the
more glorious will be the
rewards in which his soul
will be decked. Hence the ^{cyms} ~~the~~
ascetics the monks, the
hermits, the anchorites,
~~the lovers of poverty~~ and
the whole school of thought
that has come to look
upon poverty as something
sacred ^{something worthy of admiration} in itself. Now the
fact of the matter is that
poverty is as great a
danger to the spiritual
life of man as great
wealth ^{is}; that the empty

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9.

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Stomach is as sure to
starve the soul as the
crammed man will choke
it in obesity.

I ~~was~~ ^{was very} fortunate for the
civilization of Europe that
it did not take this doctrine
of poverty which early Christian
monks preached ~~too~~ ^{too} seriously.
~~People who~~ ^{People who} have always
been poor have never
produced great art or
literature. The backward
races and peoples of the
world to-day are much
as live from hand to
mouth. For true culture
and civilization a certain
degree of comfort and leisure

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10.

is required, a respite from physical
toil, and a resumption of energy
for spiritual pursuits.

~~The danger of poverty is mani-
fold. Poverty is an ever present~~

Gilbert R. Chesterton defines a
poor man "as a man who has
not got much money," and ~~insists~~
~~states with the result~~ that
there is no more need to study
the psychology of poverty than to
study the psychology of bad
temper. But, Chesterton notwith-
standing, there is a psychology
of poverty. ~~because~~ The definition
of the poor man ~~is not complete~~
~~when we say that he is one who~~ ^{is incomplete}
has not got much money ^{for it}
does not take into account the

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It is true that some very
poor men have become very great.
But poverty was no more the
cause of their greatness than was
the wealth of those who were
great-and rich. The exceptional
man-the genius-will be great
in spite of all poverty ailments
or deformities in spite of all
obstacles in life. For he is in
possession

11^b

510 VALLEY SPRING, WHEELING, W. VA.

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[Handwritten scribbles]

7 that living fire that
can purges life 7 all its
dross that can forge a
paradise out of chaos and
bring sunshine out of sky pain
dorm. But we speak of the
average man and not
of the Superman. and ~~finally~~
the moral status of society
is ultimately ~~determined~~ ^{threat} by
~~group~~ ^{group} values and ^{group} standards.

~~Poverty is an ever present
menace to ^{culture} ~~our~~ civilization.
For poverty makes men greedy
just as hunger makes
men gluttonous. Poverty has
a tendency to make idols
to enthrone wealth; to make~~

11^c.

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Poverty is the force of a truly spiritual religion. The poor man, deprived in this world of his physical wants, creates for himself another world & a heaven of all physical joys. God himself is re-

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12.

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gated to the position of a universal paying teller, returning so much in joy and comfort for every good deed that is turned in. Religious that appeal to the masses play upon these crude yearnings and cravings of the ignorant poor.

Ignorance is the foe of democracy for poverty spells ignorance and ignorance means lack of opportunity and lack of opportunity means slavery. The hope of democracy lies in the education of the masses and poverty makes this impossible.

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13.

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~~WHEELING~~

Wheeler

A constitution must be backed
by the full dinner pail or
it will be destroyed. There
is an ever-lurking threat
a muffled thunder and
blast, a concealed hate a
gnawing volcano in poverty.
~~Poverty is suspicious, selfish,~~
~~impatient.~~ No stable government
can ever be founded upon such
unrest. In a word - no idealism
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long as the poor in vast
numbers are with us.

But the converse is equally
true. The poor will always be
with us as long as idealism
does not permeate our social
being. We have from time

The hope of democracy lies in
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but poverty makes this impossible.



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19.
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14^h

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(cont. on page 15.)