

WHY THE PULPIT "KNOCKS" BUSINESS.

WHY should the building of a schoolhouse be a carnival of private profit for both laborers and contractors when "the teaching in it is expected to be full of the love of fine workmanship and the joy of usefulness?" Why, during war, must the manufacture of munitions be "a wild debauch of private profits, but the firing of them 'over there' be a matter of self-forgetful sacrifice?" Why, again, should the head of a sugar corporation think it fair to get out of the consumer all he can, when the physician is expected to care for the undernourished with self-sacrificing devotion? There is no answer to that "why," says Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, who is known for his "liberal" views and for his staunch support of the Church militant. In one of his lectures appearing in book form under the title, "Christianity and Progress" (Fleming H. Revell Company) he asserts that for multitudes of people business is still in the unredeemed state in which nursing and teaching and doctoring were at the beginning, and that "nothing can save us from the personal and social consequence of this unhappy situation except the clear vision of the basic meaning of business in terms of service, and the courageous reorganization of personal motive and economic institutions around that idea." If, then, Christianity is sincerely interested in the quality of human spirits in the motives and ideals which dominate personality, it must, he argues, be interested in the economic and industrial problems of the day. Sacrifice and service, he insists, are as much demanded of those who enter the business of buying and selling as of those whose calling is to minister to human need and suffering. Morals have their place in the counting-house as well as in the pulpit.

Speaking in the name of "thousands of Christian ministers in this country," Dr. Fosdick declares that they did not go into the ministry of Jesus Christ "either for money or for fun." They entered the sacred calling because they "believed in Jesus Christ and were assured that only he and his truth could medicine the sorry ills of this sick world." But notwithstanding this high motive they see some of their fairest achievements, some of the dearest things they work for, "going to pieces on the rocks of the business world." Against this unhappy state of affairs he cries:

"You wish us to preach against sin, but you forget that, as one of our leading sociologists has said, the master iniquities of our time are connected with money-making. You wish us to imbue your boys and girls with ideal standards of life, but all too often we see them, having left our schools and colleges, full of the knightly chivalry of youth, torn in the world of business between the ideal of Christlikeness and the selfish rivalry of commercial conflict. We watch them growing sordid, disillusioned, mercenary, spoiled at last and bereft of their youth's fine promise. You wish us to preach human brotherhood in Christ, and then we see that the one chief enemy of brotherhood between men and nations is economic strife, the root of class consciousness and war. You send some of us as your representatives to the ends of the earth to proclaim the Saviour, and then these missionaries send back word that the non-Christian world knows all too well how far from dominant in our business life our Christian ideals are and that the non-Christian world delays accepting our Christ until we have better proved that his principles will work. Everywhere that the Christian minister turns, he finds his dearest ideals and hopes entangled in the economic life. Do you ask us, then, under these conditions to keep our hands off? In God's name, you ask too much!

"In the twentieth century the great conflict in the world's life is centered in economics. The most vital questions with which we deal are entangled with economic motives and institutions. As in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries great changes were inevitable, so now the economic world can not possibly remain static. The question is not whether changes will occur, but how they will occur, under whose egis and superintendence, by whose guidance and direction, and how much better the world will be when they are here. Among all the interests that are vitally concerned with the nature of these changes none has more at stake than the Christian Church, with her responsibility for the cure of souls."