

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

(Gen. 3:17-19)

Some have interpreted this passage as teaching that work is a result of sin and that if man had not sinned he would not have to work. This is probably an inaccurate interpretation of the effects of sin because man was commanded to work before he sinned. It is possible that some of the 'thorns and thistles' which cause man's struggle in his work might not exist if man had not sinned. However, theorizing about 'what might have been if . . . ' is always dangerous and fruitless.

Man will continue to work, and in that work he will reap the rich fruits which God brings forth from the land. These fruits are essential for his physical sustenance, and he will thereby feel himself to be of worth and will contribute his part to the welfare of man.

Work in Old Testament times

The first work was probably hunting and cultivating the land. Cain and Abel dedicated themselves to these activities and brought of the fruit of their labours to make an offering to God. Noah and his family dedicated themselves to the work of building the ark in order to escape the flood, and after the flood they worked in the vineyard. Abraham and his family were dedicated to the rearing of domesticated animals in the nomadic life. The Hebrew slaves were forced to work in making bricks of straw and mud in Egypt before their liberation by Moses. Thus the first pages of the Old Testament indicate that men and women looked upon the various kinds of work as normal outlets for their strength, intelligence, and personal satisfaction.

Several of the prophets condemned economic injustice in their day. Deceit was common; false weights were used to rob the people. Extortion of the land and possessions of others was practised by those in positions of privilege. Dishonesty was the rule of the day. The poor and oppressed were usually victims of dishonesty on the part of the rich (see Amos 2:6-8; Micah 2:1-3).

The writer of the Book of Proverbs gave much counsel to illustrate the fact that there is dignity in work. He especially condemned laziness:

I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.

(Proverbs 24:30-31)

In another passage, he said, 'He becometh poor that deal-eth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich' (10:4).

Work in New Testament teaching

Jesus assumed that work was a natural part of life. Many of the parables are based on the common tasks that existed in that day. The sower who went forth to sow, the treasure that was

TRUE OR FALSE?

1. Work is a curse because it is the result of sin. _____
2. Man was commanded to work before he sinned. _____

(1. False, 2. True)

FILL IN THE BLANKS.

The Old Testament indicates that people looked upon work as a normal outlet for their s _____, i _____, and s _____.

(strength, intelligence, satisfaction)

Proverbs advocates d _____ in work and condemns l _____.

(dignity, laziness)

Jesus' parables indicate that He considered work to be a _____ part of life.

(natural)

hidden in a field, the leaven, and the foolish builder are only a few illustrations of people's work in Jesus' day. The parable of the talents is probably the clearest indication from Jesus that He expects man to use his abilities to the maximum in service during his life. Jesus' condemnation of the man who received one talent was not because of his limited resources but because of his unwillingness to use his one talent (Matt. 25:26-30). Jesus praised the industriousness which enabled some to multiply the talents which they had received.

Jesus called his disciples from among those who were busy at their work. Some were fishermen, one was a tax collector, and some were probably businessmen. He invited them to leave their work in order to become His disciples because He knew that His plan of work for them would demand their complete commitment. This example shows that Jesus also makes a place for the person who dedicates himself completely to the Lord's work.

Paul was very outspoken in his declarations about the need for men to work. He personally gave a good example and took pride in his ability to support himself when necessary, thus not having to depend upon others (1 Cor. 4:12; 1 Thess. 2:9). In his second letter to the Thessalonians he said:

For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; Neither did we eat any man's bread for naught; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you.

(2 Thess. 3:7-8)

Since there were some at Thessalonica who had quit work and were just waiting for the Second Coming of Christ, Paul admonished them, 'If any would not work, neither should he eat' (2 Thess. 3:10). He also told them that by working they would give a good example to the entire community (1 Thess. 4:11-12).

In Ephesus, Paul told those who stole before becoming Christians to steal no more; rather they should work with their hands to provide the necessities of life (Eph. 4:28). One should work and be able to distribute to those who cannot work because of some physical disability.

Is work degrading?

Some people look upon certain kinds of work as very menial and thereby degrading. Among the Greeks, society was divided into the classes of the industrial worker, the soldier, and the highest class which was composed of intellectuals and rulers. Each class had its respective virtue of temperance, courage, and wisdom. The ruling class naturally looked down on the inferior classes for the work which they did.

This attitude was handed down through the ages. Of the Middle Ages, Knudson says:

Work was regarded as fundamentally a 'curse'. It was a penalty imposed on man for his primal sin. As such it had its value. Since the Fall it had been an important means of discipline. It had acted as a curb on vice. . . . Work was better than idleness. But the 'contemplative' life was nevertheless higher than the 'active' life, and the active life of the secular clergy, as distinguished from the contemplative life of the monastic orders, was higher than the active life of the lay folk. . . . The life of the spirit was regarded as so superior to that of the body that anything

FILL IN THE BLANKS.

Jesus called his disciples from among the _____ class.

(working)

Paul declared man's need to _____. He set the example by _____ himself.

(work, supporting)

LIST SOME ILLUSTRATIONS OF PAUL'S ADMONITIONS TO WORK.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

FILL IN THE BLANK.

During the Middle Ages, work was regarded as a _____.

(curse)

having to do primarily with the latter received necessarily an inferior rating.¹

The leaders of the Protestant Reformation differed with the predominating ideas about work in their day. Luther and Calvin looked upon vocation as a calling from God. Calvin called work an act of worship. Luther insisted that man should remain in the work in which he was brought up and should not try to change vocations. But Calvin gave freedom to man to move from one vocation or calling to another.²

The Protestant Reformers rejected the distinctions that previously existed among the various classes of work and recognized three distinct functions that work fulfils for man. First, work fulfils the commandment of God to replenish the earth and exercise dominion over the animals. Second, it is essential for serving one's fellow-man. The purpose of work is not just to sustain life but to create a civilization.³ Third, work contributes to one's own development. Through work, man learns to discipline himself by cultivating patience, persistence, and faithfulness. He acquires knowledge and skill and develops his personality.

We cannot deny the fact that some kinds of work are more pleasant to some people than to others. This attitude about work has nothing to do with whether or not the work is dignified: some people prefer working with plants and animals, others prefer machinery, and still others prefer to work with people. Every person ought to be able to work at a job that gives him satisfaction.

Just wages should be paid for a just day's work. Working conditions should be as pleasant and healthful as possible. The management should be diligent in improving the conditions of the workmen and in increasing their compensation. All of these ideals are in keeping with the spirit of the teachings of Jesus and the biblical writers.

Christianity and Material Possessions

Biblical principles concerning private property

The Old Testament presents the basic point of view that all that is upon the earth belongs ultimately to God, 'The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein (Ps. 24:1). God said to Abraham, 'I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it' (Gen. 15:7). Abraham realized that God had given him the land for an inheritance. He recognized the supreme ownership of God in all things.

Another basic principle about property is that God has conceded to man the right to possess land and other material things for his own good and that of his neighbours. Leviticus sets forth laws which make provisions for orphans, widows, and foreigners. The reapers were instructed to leave the gleanings and the corners of the fields for persons without support and thus dependent upon acts of kindness for sustenance. The Book of Ruth contains illustrations of how these practices were carried out.

When the land was divided among the inhabitants of the

¹Albert C. Knudson, *The Principles of Christian Ethics* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1943), p. 272.

²Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, 2 vols. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931), 2:609-11.

³Knudson, *Christian Ethics*, pp. 273-4.

LIST TWO LEADERS OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION WHO LOOKED ON WORK AS A CALLING FROM GOD.

1. _____
2. _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

LIST THREE FUNCTIONS OF WORK ACCORDING TO THE PROTESTANT REFORMERS.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

FILL IN THE BLANK.

One biblical principle concerning private property is that everything belongs to _____.

(God)

Another biblical principle concerning private property is that God gives man the right to own _____ for his own good and that of his _____.

(property, neighbour)

twelve tribes, boundaries were established for each owner. To move the stakes that marked the boundaries was a grave crime, 'Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark' (Deut. 27:17). Hosea, in the eighth century before Christ, prophesied about the same crime, 'The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound: therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water' (Hos. 5:10).

Many of the details of the Law have to do with the protection of property rights in ancient times. Thus God recognized the principle of private property and gave man laws to protect these rights.

Jesus and private property

Jesus took the possession of property for granted. He accepted the customs of His day regarding relationships among owners, workers, and stewards (Matt. 21:33-36; Luke 20:9-16). Among the sins which He condemned as coming out of the heart of man are 'thefts, covetousness, wickedness, and deceit' (Mark 7:22).

Jesus did not overlook the social ills and the injustices that resulted from the economic conditions of His day. He held up the virtues which, if practised, would ultimately eliminate those ills. His emphasis upon compassion shows that man must be willing to share his possessions with those in need, regardless of whether or not they merit such help because of laziness, lack of initiative, or any other problem. Human need takes precedence over property rights, and Jesus eulogized those who are willing to help the unfortunate victims of circumstances (Matt. 25:31-46). The parable of the Good Samaritan illustrates His appreciation for the man who willingly and spontaneously helps others in need.

Jesus warned of the pitfalls related to material possessions. He recognized that too much concern for the things of this world and the deceitful nature of material possessions can undermine man's spiritual perception and make him overlook the more important dimensions of life. In His exposition on the meaning of the parable of the sower, He mentioned that some seeds fall among thorns and the 'care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word' (Matt. 13:22). Upon seeing the sadness of the rich young man who turned from Jesus because he did not want to give up his riches, Jesus said, 'Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. 19:23). He also said that the life of man 'consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth' (Luke 12:15).

The early Church and material possessions

When one reads the first chapters of the Book of Acts, he recognizes that, because of the special circumstances in which the new Christians found themselves, those who had food, clothing, and other material possessions shared them freely and spontaneously with others who had need. In some cases individual Christians sold their possessions in order to provide necessities for other Christians (Acts 2:44, 45; 4:32). Some have used this precedent to teach that the first Christians were communistic, and they further teach by implication that Christians today should do the same. However, it needs to be clarified that there are great differences between what these Christians did and what communists hold today. The early

FILL IN THE BLANKS.

Jesus took for granted the possession of _____.

(property)

Jesus' emphasis on compassion indicates that man must be willing to _____ his _____ with those in _____.

(share, possessions, need)

Human need takes _____ over property rights.

(precedence)

LIST TWO PITFALLS WHICH JESUS WARNED AGAINST IN RELATION TO MATERIAL POSSESSIONS.

1. _____
2. _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Christians placed their possessions in a common treasury, but this practice was voluntary, spontaneous, temporary, and a special response to a particular crisis which arose. We do not see in this incident a mandate from God to do the same on a universal scale today. Later in the New Testament, the practice was discontinued. Human nature was such that the practice caused some special problems with Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10). Instead, a system of collecting special offerings was instituted in which those who had possessions could share with those who were in need. In his missionary journeys, Paul collected money and took it with him on a trip to Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:1). Another great difference between the practice of Christians in that day and the communistic method today is the love which motivated the Christians to respond to the needs of others. The sharing of the first Christians was an act of self-preservation.

Soon the early Church had members from all social classes. Although most of the early believers were from the poor and lower middle classes, the commercial and property classes were reached also. The Book of James illustrates these different classes and points out that there was already a tendency to pay more attention to the rich and powerful (James 2:2-4).

The church fathers in the early centuries of Christianity promoted and eulogized the ascetic life, warning against the dangers of materialism and riches. Through the history of Christendom, some small groups have regarded poverty and communal ownership as norms, but most Christians respect the right of private property.

In addition to the biblical principles which can be seen to permit private property, Harkness gives three arguments in favour of it.⁴ First, the full development of the personality demands the freedom to have material possessions and private property. Economic insecurity produces personal insecurity. He who has something, which is his very own and over which he has dominion, has a greater motive in living. Second, if the economic system gives the privilege of possessing personal property, then the level of life is elevated considerably. If man knows that he is going to benefit proportionally with the amount produced, this knowledge is a great incentive to produce more. Third, the motive of personal gain is always a stimulus to work harder. There are few who work with the same diligence when the amount of recompense is no incentive. Few work simply for the pleasure of working with no interest in the remuneration. Personal satisfaction is an incentive, but monetary remuneration is highly effective also.

Dangers inherent in material possessions

One of the greatest dangers related to possessing material goods is avarice or greed. Jesus warned, 'Beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth' (Luke 12:15). There is always a danger that when one's needs are met adequately he will begin to covet a little more and a little more. Sometimes people who are effective in their service to God while poor lose some of their commitment when they become more affluent. Some have abandoned completely the Lord's work in order to earn more money in business or commercial ventures.

⁴Georgia Harkness, *Christian Ethics* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), pp. 146-8.

FILL IN THE BLANKS.

The early Christians emphasized a v _____, s _____ sharing of material possessions.

(voluntary, spontaneous)

James 2:2-3 indicates there soon came a tendency to pay more attention to the _____ and _____.

(rich, powerful)

GIVE HARKNESS' THREE ARGUMENTS FOR THE RIGHT TO OWN PROPERTY.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

FILL IN THE BLANK.

A grave danger related to possessions is _____.

(greed)

Another problem has to do with the distribution of this world's goods. Today many countries enjoy a level of material prosperity that is very high, while many other countries are inhabited by masses of people who live on the brink of starvation. Even though some countries produce more than they can consume, to get the surplus distributed to another country half-way around the world and eventually into the hands of those who need it is a complicated process. Many programmes of aid have been attempted, but none has proven completely satisfactory.

Among Christians in some countries there are evidences of a growing consciousness and desire to help those who are victims of hunger, earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, and other calamities. When news of hurricane Fifi reached other countries, the immediate response in money, material goods, and specialized personnel was impressive. There are special studies under way now to discover more effective ways to send out the call for help in cases of emergencies in the future. More people are awakening to the critical human suffering that exists because of a lack of material resources in many countries, and it is hoped that adequate methods will be found to channel help.

Many countries of the Third World have programmes of assistance and development and are making progress towards providing the necessary means for assistance. There is a tendency for neighbouring countries to join together for the common good of all and to give special consideration in commerce to member nations. Countries which produce certain commodities exchange these for items they need from other countries. Similar projects are being carried on in education, hygiene, and many other facets of life. Agrarian reform has been helpful in some cases, but complicated laws and governmental restrictions have blocked significant progress in some countries. It is important for nations with an abundance of resources to help others, and the initiative many nations are taking in developing their own resources for assisting others is encouraging to see.

Christianity and Economic Systems

The Bible does not give a systematic treatment of any economic system. Economic systems cannot be referred to as being 'scriptural' or 'Christian'. Rather, we can see some Christian and unchristian qualities in every system.

Capitalism

Capitalism is an economic system which is characterized by the following:

1. Goods are privately or corporately owned.
2. Investments are determined by private decision rather than state control.
3. Prices, production, and distribution of goods are determined mainly by competition in a free market.

The beginning of capitalism as an economic system is difficult to date, but some of the basic practices which are judged as capitalistic are very ancient. The claim has been made that Calvin and the Protestant Reformation brought capitalism into being because Calvin emphasized so strongly the practices of prudence, frugality, industriousness, and honesty in business dealings. He also permitted a just percentage of interest to be charged on loans, which has become one of the chief means of

FILL IN THE BLANKS.

Another problem related to possessions has to do with imbalance in _____ of the worlds goods.

(distribution)

However, there are evidences of growing c _____ and d _____ to help among Christians.

(consciousness, desire)

LIST THE QUALITIES WHICH CALVIN EMPHASIZED WHICH LED TO THE CHARGE THAT HE BROUGHT CAPITALISM INTO BEING.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

capitalistic growth.⁵ This practice was a departure from the position of the Roman Catholic Church which condemned usury, or the collection of interest on loans.

Although Calvin did emphasize these qualities, it must be recognized also that there were other factors that influenced capitalism as a system in its developmental stages. Capitalism cannot be attributed exclusively to the 'Protestant ethic'. The discovery of additional continents, the development of maritime commerce with improved modes of sea travel, and the industrial revolution are other events that contributed greatly to the development of capitalism.

There have been phenomenal economic growth and prosperity in the last two centuries in countries where capitalism is the prevailing system. The standard of living has risen many times for the inhabitants of these countries. Many can enjoy such comforts as automobiles, domestic appliances, and leisure activities which help to enrich life.

We must recognize that capitalism has some negatives on the debit side of the ledger. The system leads to inequalities which seem to increase as the rich become richer and the poor remain in hopelessness. Capitalism tends to give more power to the few who control the means of production. This economic system encourages covetousness and an attitude of materialism and intensifies competition. All of these tendencies are condemned by the writers of the New Testament.

Some feel that capitalism needs war or the threat of war in order to keep it afloat. The build-up in military and war material seems to loom upon the horizon when threats of recession are heard.

Socialism

Socialism was born as an antithesis to individualism in ownership of property. This economic system had its beginnings in Great Britain under the leadership of Robert Owen, and the name *socialist* was officially adopted in 1841.⁶ During the same years, the followers of Claude-Henry de Rouvroy banded together in France to promote a new way of life based upon collective control of wealth as over against the existing system of commercial competition. Later Marx and Engels designated these schools of thought as *utopian socialism* as over against their system of *scientific socialism*. Socialism emphasizes the importance of planned control and organization in the affairs of a nation.

All forms of socialism advocate, in some form or another, the emancipation of capital from private ownership and the vesting of it in the community for the general benefit of the majority of the people. There are many variations of the system because each country has peculiar circumstances and needs. Also the natural resources in any given country influence to a great extent the degree of government control needed.

Some forms of socialism could be classified as atheist and completely materialistic, but there are other forms that carry the name *Christian socialism*. They have as their main goal the implementation of the social implications of the Christian gospel. Socialism is very attractive to the people of the world who have never had many possessions and who have very

⁵R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1926).

⁶*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1954 ed., s.v. 'Socialism'.

LIST SOME OTHER FACTORS WHICH ENCOURAGED THE GROWTH OF CAPITALISM.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

LIST SOME ADVANTAGES OF CAPITALISM.

1. _____
2. _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

LIST SOME DISADVANTAGES OF CAPITALISM.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

FILL IN THE BLANKS:

Socialism is based on _____ control of wealth over against individual _____.

(collective, ownership)

Socialism gives its reason for government control of capital as the general _____ of the majority of the _____. There are many variations of this system because:

1. Each country has peculiar _____ and _____.
2. Each country's natural _____ influence its degree of _____ control.

(benefit, people; 1. circumstances, needs; 2. resources, government)

little hope of improving their economic and social positions. On the other hand, those who have worked to accumulate private property and some material goods resist socialism because it tends to equalize everybody and thereby stifle initiative.

Perhaps the greatest advantage of socialism is to those who would not otherwise have adequate opportunities. Medical facilities are more readily available to those who need them under this system. Laws and governmental policies work to benefit a greater percentage of the population than is true of capitalistic systems.

Paul Sigmund says that the majority of the international leaders in the world have rejected the capitalistic method of development because it is too slow, inefficient, and inept.⁷ The opinion of the majority of international leaders is that rapid economic development can take place more readily in a controlled economy, such as socialism.

Even capitalistic countries have some characteristics of socialism in that the government controls certain aspects of the economic life. There are disadvantages to this aspect, but perhaps it does give the greatest advantage to the majority of the people. Socialism insists that each individual has the right to share the profits equally; this gives to each individual an equal opportunity. Governmental controls are exercised instead of private enterprise. Thus greater power is achieved by the government, because economic and political forces are merged.

Communism

The last century saw the beginning of an economic, political, philosophical, and religious system which has had phenomenal growth in the world. This movement is communism. This system is also called *Marxism* because of its founder Karl Marx. The basic idea of communism is that all property belongs to everyone. Each one produces according to his ability and each one receives according to his need.

Marxism is a materialistic philosophy of life based on what Marx called *dialectical materialism*. The basic idea is that man is what he eats; there is no god, no soul, and no future life. Man's basic concern is to live here with his material needs met. Marx had a goal of doing away with class divisions in his hopes of establishing a society in which everyone would be on the same level. He anticipated a revolution in the capitalistic countries among the working classes; however, this did not happen. The communistic theories were applied in Russia, following the revolution there in 1917, under the leadership of Lenin. During the first few years, the movement did not succeed in applying the theories of Marx. Later, under the leadership of Stalin and his successive five-year plans, Russia began to make progress.

Communism is attractive to many people, especially to the 'have nots' of the world. It promises them equal distribution of the land and its fruit. Because of the effectiveness of communist propaganda and tactics, this philosophy has enveloped one-third of the population of the world. While the standard of living has been raised to some degree in some of these countries, there still remains much poverty and hunger in most of them. The countries dominated by communism have not

FILL IN THE BLANKS.

A disadvantage of socialism is that it tends to equalize everybody and thereby stifle i_____.

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Perhaps the greatest advantage of socialism is that the majority of the people are provided n_____ and o_____ which they would not likely have under other systems.

(necessities, opportunities)

Communism is an e_____, p_____, p_____, and r_____ system based on the idea that all property belongs to e_____. This system is also called M_____.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Marxism is a materialistic philosophy which views man as what he _____; there is no _____, no _____, and no _____ life.

(eats, god, soul, future)

Communism is attractive to many in the world today because it promises equal distribution of the _____ and its _____. Communism has grown rapidly because of its effective _____ and _____.

(land, fruits, propaganda, tactics)

⁷Paul E. Sigmund, Jr., ed., *The Ideologies of the Developing Nations* (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1963), pp. 12, 17.

surpassed the capitalistic and democratic countries in their scientific achievement or standard of living.

Communism is not the answer to man's needs, either economic or spiritual. This system has not been able to solve the problems related to the production, distribution, and consumption of material goods. Since communism has no spiritual basis, it cannot solve man's deeper sense of hunger for spiritual satisfaction. Although it may continue to spread to other areas of the world, ultimately it will be defeated. 'Man shall not live by bread alone' (Matt. 4:4).

The Christian Conscience in Economic Matters

Many Christians have been indifferent through the years to the economic injustices existing in the world. Some have been more concerned with man's spiritual relationship to God and have tended to hope that someone else would take care of the injustices in the world. But there is an awakening on the part of many Christians to recognize that the Christian faith has application to this sphere of life. Christianity should speak messages of judgement to owners of factories and businesses when they do not pay proper wages, when their work results in the pollution of the air and the streams, and when conditions are substandard from the point of view of health or safety factors. The Christian message should speak to the conditions of hunger, unemployment, and disease which are real problems today.

There was a time when anyone who became concerned about man's physical and social welfare was termed a 'liberal' or 'modernist' by the more conservative wing of the theological world. But today more and more conservatives are becoming involved in man's plight. We may still believe that man's situation is solved best by forming a spiritual foundation for living through faith in Christ, but we also affirm his need to face up to other problems which, when solved, can do much to enrich his life.

Christianity affirms that human life is more important than monetary matters and material goods. The Christian should not permit his own economic interests to make him insensitive to misery and suffering. He can rejoice more in the riches that he has if he is sharing them with those who have helped to make him rich. A recent news release described the death of one of the richest men in the world. He started out as a poor, young man; he immigrated to another country and began to work hard. With some luck and some wise purchases he gradually became quite rich. But the news article pointed out that he died without philanthropic plans and with no friends. What a commentary on the truths dealt with in this chapter! Even though material goods help to enrich life, they are not all that matter.

John Bennett says that the Christian Church has four duties in the economic sphere. First, it should teach the Christian principles of conduct without compromise. Second, the Church should recognize that all the norms of activity in society are under the judgement of God. Third, it should search for the course of action that is wisest in the light of this judgement upon life and its institutions. And fourth, it should help to develop the structures and institutions in this world that are

FILL IN THE BLANKS.

Communism is not the answer to man's needs because it has not solved the problems related to p _____, d _____, and c _____ of material goods; since it has no spiritual basis, it cannot solve man's s _____ hunger.

(production, distribution, consumption, spiritual)

The Christian's concern should be two-fold:

1. Man's situation is solved best by forming a spiritual foundation for living through _____ in _____.
2. Man has other _____ which must be _____.

(1. faith, Christ; 2. problems, solved)

FINISH READING THIS PARAGRAPH ON THE NEXT PAGE AND LIST FOUR DUTIES OF THE CHURCH IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE ACCORDING TO BENNETT.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

most in harmony with Christian principles, in order that the Christian can practise his Christian vocation.⁸

⁸John C. Bennett, et al., *Christian Values and Economic Life* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1954), pp. 202-3.

Home Study Exercise

Basic assignment (*Levels 1, 2, and 3*). Do the following exercise.

1. Is work a curse or a blessing for man? Explain your answer.

2. What was Jesus' attitude towards work?

3. What did John Calvin call work?

4. List three functions that work fulfils for man.

5. What are two basic Old Testament principles about property?

6. What was Jesus' attitude towards the ownership of property?

7. What did Jesus do about injustices that resulted from the economic conditions of His day?

8. What were Calvin's emphases that brought about the claim that he originated capitalism?

9. What has been the chief means of capitalistic growth?

10. What other factors have contributed to the rise of capitalism?

11. List some disadvantages of capitalism.

12. Define *socialism*.

13. Why are there so many variations to socialism?

14. What is the disadvantage of socialism?

15. According to this study guide, what is the greatest advantage of socialism?

16. Define *communism*.

17. Why has communism made such large advances among the people of the world?

18. What are some disadvantages of communism?

19. List four things Bennett says the Church should do in the economic sphere.

Supplementary assignment (*Levels 2 and 3*). Read pages 144-60 in *Introducing Christian Ethics*, and do the following exercise.

1. What did the apostolic church do about possessions?
2. State Paul's teachings regarding the economic life.
3. Summarize the basic principles of possessions found in the Bible.
4. Does the Bible present a Christian economic system? Explain your answer.

Advanced assignment (*Level 3*). Do the following additional exercise based on the above reading assignment.

1. Outline the historic concern of the Church towards economics.
2. Outline the sources of the Christian doctrine of vocation.
3. Describe the economic problems of the world and point out their complexities.

Seminar Discussion

1. What biblical concepts should help develop Christian attitudes towards economics?
2. What can the Church do to help the world-wide economic problems?
3. What is the most pressing economic problem in your country? Why is it the most pressing problem? How can Christian principles of economic life be applied to it?
4. What is the relationship of economics to the Christian doctrine of stewardship?