

**THE MONEY GOD; CHAPTERS OF
HERESY AND DISSENT
CONCERNING BUSINESS
METHODS AND MERCENARY
IDEALS IN AMERICAN LIFE**

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The money god; chapters of heresy and dissent concerning business methods and mercenary ideals in American life by John C. Van Dyke

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JOHN C. VAN DYKE

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*CHAPTERS OF HERESY AND DISSENT CONCERN-
ING BUSINESS METHODS AND MERCENARY
IDEALS IN AMERICAN LIFE*

BY

JOHN C. VAN DYKE

AUTHOR OF "THE DESERT," "THE OPAL SEA," "ART
FOR ART'S SAKE," "THE MEANING
OF PICTURES," ETC.

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PREFACE

I HAVE waited twenty years for some professor of economics or properly equipped student of sociology to write this book. Unhappily for my hope the economist seems always engaged in figuring out how mankind can get more money for less labor, and the sociologist is absorbed in demonstrating that everybody ought to be helped in some manner, by somebody, to something. So at last, weary of hearing the spade called a shovel, weary of being told to look There when the trouble is Here, I have made a dash at the subject myself, with the thought that perhaps others may be led thereby to consider it more fully and more scientifically.

This is not the kind of book that one writes for pleasure. To talk of our national successes is more agreeable than pointing out our national shortcomings. Possibly that is why the orator and the writer choose to enlarge upon our virtues, our energy and cleverness, our possessions, our sheer "bigness." But whatsoever of good lies with us we already know. Everyone tells us about it until our conceit and complacency have

grown colossal. To start upon another tack and speak of mean ambitions, low aims and positive evils is to be called a pessimist, a scold, or an altogether gloomy person. The reviewer demolishes you with a sentence about the need of constructive rather than destructive criticism, and the galled jade in the street perhaps winces out something ancient about a lack of the sense of humor. There is nothing pleasant in telling people to

"Leave sack and live cleanly."

And yet if the man, or the nation, is ever to "live cleanly" he must be told that "sack" is the main cause of his uncleanness. As I conceive the evil of these American days, it lies in our ambition for mere wealth, for objective possessions, for material successes. This has passed of recent years into a greed of gain, and our American virtue of thrift, with which no one could quarrel, has turned into an American vice of avarice. It has made us the wealthiest nation in the world, and we pride ourselves on this success; but I have had the temerity in these pages to suggest that there are other and perhaps nobler successes than the accumulation of wealth, and that a man, or a nation, may be rich and yet signally fail of being a factor in human well-being or human progress.

With what power lay in my elbow I have made a "drive" at the American money ideal and the means of its attainment, at business legislation, compensation,

and education, at our commercialized professions, at the "development" of the country by the exhaustion of our national resources, at the wide trail of waste left by the "developers," at our modern towns with their lack of stability and our open country with its lack of improvement, at our false notions of money and what it will do for us, at the idea that wealth will insure weal, and at the commoner fallacy that the rich are happier than the poor. My only regret in all this is that I have not had more power and more skill in wielding the driver. Beyond that I have no apology whatever to make. For, in the main, the truth, as many people see it, has been told, let Business say what it will.

Nor shall I apologize for suggesting at the end the necessity of the moral element in our national life. In the final appeal the salvation of the nation, as of the individual, lies in the acceptance of the Ten Commandments and the gospel of love and faith. They have always existed; it is safe to say they always will exist. The gilded generation of to-day has no substitute to offer for them. They are things of the mind and the heart that cannot be bought, neither can they be bribed to keep silence. In the long run they will surely bring every one of us into judgment.

J. C. V. D.

RUTGERS COLLEGE,
January, 1908.



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