

## Does God or the Church Change? (March 6, 1909)

Those who make private property of the gifts of God pretend in vain to be innocent; for, in thus retaining the subsistence of the poor, they are the murderers of those who die every day for want of it.

Whom do you suppose brought this drastic indictment against the private ownership of land — the most essential gift of God? Some wild-eyed socialist? Not so. It was none other than Gregory the Great,<sup>1</sup> the first Pope of Rome of that name, and who has been canonized. If that was good Catholicism in days gone by, what is the matter with it today?

St. Gregory saw that by the few owning the earth they could and did levy tribute upon the poor for the use of the land, and he called them murderers.

Are there any high churchmen today denouncing the private ownership of God's gifts? You do not hear of them, do you? On the other hand, they are defending the private ownership of the earth and everything that is in it or on it, under it, or above it.

The rich have captured the church and use it to oppress the poor. I suppose some will denounce the *Appeal* for calling attention to this, or they may claim that God has changed since St. Gregory was the head of the church. Read it over and see how it harmonizes with the teachings of the church today.

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Gregory I (c. 540-604) was born to a wealthy Roman family with a long connection to the Christian church. He was well educated and followed his father as prefect of Rome, the city-state's highest civil office, at the age of 33. He later converted the family villa into a monastery and took a vow of poverty. Selected as pope in 590, Pope Gregory oversaw numerous reforms of liturgical practice; he is the namesake of the Gregorian chant. Upon his death he was canonized by acclamation and is regarded as a saint by both the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches.