

Should a house burn down, how much has its owner lost? Obviously, no matter where the house is located—in a highly desirable neighborhood or only a sparsely settled one, the loss is only the cost of rebuilding and this rebuilding is apt to cost even less in a highly developed locality—HENRY W. HETZEL in *The News Letter*, official publication of the Philadelphia Teachers Organization, for May, 1933.

## Economics and Religion

SOON birds will be selecting sites for their homes in the trees. With time comes little mouths to feed and parent birds must work harder. Nature's storehouse is open to them and there they fill their needs only at the cost of labor. In the country bees are on the wing seeking flowers wherein is stored the raw materials from which they prepare their honey. All nature will soon be busy and when winter comes again the animals of nature's kingdom will have their homes and food, and the plants their season's growth.

What of man? He too, must prepare, and draw from Nature's vast and unfailling storehouse. Nature yields to man, black or white, Jew or Gentile, under the same conditions, and in like quantities if he is permitted to, and will but work. Nature, in fact, seems to have provided too well; wheat used as fuel and men hungry; cotton unpicked and men unclothed; shoes overproduced and men without them. Are birds concerned with too many worms, bees too many flowers, squirrels too many nuts?

At a certain point, as we "shoot the chutes" of what economists call the business cycle, we always hear the question: "Why poverty amidst Plenty?" Answers come from all sides; tariff, silver, God, capitalism, socialism, communism, dictatorship. All this with the low of the cycle. Eventually we turn the corner, and again we will watch the mad race of Progress and Poverty and wonder when the thousands of evil riding horsemen of the depression will again sweep down on humanity with horrors greater than those visited by wars.

Did we have to make men better, or change human nature to obtain the Dynamo, the X-Ray? Man had only to learn nature's principles that always existed. Had it been necessary to wait until men were made better, we would never have had them. Scientists seek knowledge of principles to work with them. Could the man of "faith" be so irreligious as to feel that the Creator had failed to provide the laws of Economics, the laws for the production and distribution of wealth, with which man may work?

Would not a doctor seek a cause for recurring boils? Should we not seek the cause of recurring "economic bellyaches?" Tariff, banks and bankers, wars, etc., are these first causes, or are they farther removed? It seems as futile to look for a cure of poverty and depressions by appointing these evils, as to uproot trees by pulling off leaves. Religion is deeply concerned about mankind's seemingly hopeless position. They make haste to point out that it is not God's desertion, but man's failure. Nature has been good.

A learned Rabbi of our city was quoted some time ago as saying that "Prohibition has made us of a Nation of hypocrites and liars." The personal property tax did that to us long before prohibition, and included men who never drank. Religious leaders deal with the thing they call human nature; they seek to influence men to be honest and less selfish. This brings to mind a question. Suppose the youthful David had missed the temple of Goliath and had only hit him on the nose? Is it not possible that the Church has failed to use an effective method? Are men dishonest, do they swear falsely because the personal property tax is wrong, or because man is dishonest? Perhaps this is a dishonest tax? Perhaps it is communistic? If an unjust tax is removed would not men find it easier to be honest? Will all the exhortations of the church change conditions resulting when an honest man, in his honest opinion, receives an income by man-made laws

honestly his, but which a proper study of God's economic laws by the ministers might reveal to be dishonest in moral law and equity because it was gained unfairly at the expense of others equally entitled to it? Desire to be honest cannot correct the evils arising from wrong principles believed to be right. Does this not indicate a duty on him whom the frailties of human nature lay as a burden? Would it be wrong to change human nature but changing conditions instead of hoping for it the "hard way" and in spite of conditions? Poverty breeds crime; great reforms are usually simple ones; may it not be that there is a simple economic reform that would largely banish involuntary poverty and its countless ills?—N. D. ALPER, in *The Modern View*, St. Louis, Mo.

## Washington Women at Work

THE Woman's Single Tax Club of the District of Columbia held their closing meeting for the season on Monday evening, May 1, at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Morton G. Lloyd, No. 100 Taylor Street, Chevy Chase, Md.

As all business had been dispensed with at the previous meeting and no regular minutes kept, the members reported informally on the Landlord's Game party which had constituted the April session, in the ball room of the All States Hotel, 514 19th Street, N. W. It was attended by about two dozen persons, despite a downpour of rain, the guests including a group of students from the economic class at George Washington University, accompanied by their instructor, Professor Owens, and their interest in, and grasp of, the principles involved, afforded much satisfaction to Mrs. Phillips, the inventor and director of this ingenious game which gives a practical demonstration of the working out of our present taxation system, which permits a few to accumulate at the expense of the many, and of the Henry George principle, under which wealth tends toward a more equitable distribution among the players when the rules of the game are changed in conformity with the Single Tax.

An invitation was extended by Mrs. Jessie Lane Keeley to hold the annual gathering at her home in Riverdale, Md., on the last Sunday in May, a custom which was inaugurated in 1912 and has been followed every year since without a break.

A pleasant surprise to the club was afforded at this closing meeting of the year, by the unexpected presence of Mr. and Mrs. Jackson H. Ralston, formerly Maryland residents but now living in California. Following the business meeting, Mr. Ralston, after reporting on conditions in California, gave, at the request of several of the members, a brief review of the campaign which he had been instrumental in waging in Maryland.

The following officers were elected for the ensuing year: Mrs. Walter N. Campbell, president; Mrs. Marie H. Heath, vice-president; Mrs. Jennie Knight, recording secretary; Miss Frances S. Crosby, corresponding secretary; Mrs. Lucy R. Swanton, treasurer; Mrs. Tamer F. Rorke, director to the Federation of Woman's Clubs.

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