

## Keeping Democracy's Promise

*O A of place -  
same old stuff*

WE HEAR AND READ of underprivileged persons and classes in this our free country, even of a submerged one-third, ill-fed, ill-housed, ill-clad. How can such things be in a land boasting of equal rights for all of its citizens?

We have equal political rights, only that, nothing more. It was fondly assumed that, thus endowed, we could establish and maintain equal economic rights. But in that for some seemingly mysterious reason we have failed and to that extent our democracy is a failure.

We have equal political rights. Of what use are they without equal economic rights? None whatever; just an aggravation, a delusion, a mockery, and a heart-break. But possession of equal political rights, manhood suffrage, gives us the power to remedy all our social and economic ills, if and when we acquire the wisdom and courage to do so. Therein rests the power, glory, and enchantment of democracy. Thus far in our history the promise has not yet proved the reality; but the present generation of democrats are determined it shall not prove to be an empty one.

If all men are endowed by their Creator with equal rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, then it follows as the day the night that He has also endowed them with equal rights to the means of life which He has so abundantly and beneficently founded. Is not this a necessary, an inevitable implication; that all men have equal rights to share in the bounty of God in nature; that they have equal rights to live upon and use the earth—the land—which the Lord, created for them and deeded to them at the eve of creation: "The heavens are mine, saith the Lord, but the earth have I given to the children of men." The Lord is still in possession of the heavens. It is beyond the reach of the cunning, crafty, greedy land monopolists; but they have stolen the earth from the children of men. The earth was thus given or deeded to the "children of men, to all mankind on equal terms, without exception, without restrictions as to race, color or previous or present condition of servitude, and without regard to social, political, or industrial standing. All equal in His sight, all alike shares of His bounty."

That is the first deed, the best deed, the only deed backed by sufficient authority. He gave us the earth, our dwelling-place unto all generations, our storehouse filled to overflowing with His marvelous riches and bounty, sufficient for our maintenance for

all time.

The Psalmist aptly gave voice to this eternal truth in that wonderful 23rd Psalm and in His declaration: "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." This was true then, is true now, and will ever be true so long as the earth remains. This haughty tribe of despoilers, known as landlords, demanding tribute from their fellows for the use of the earth, are mere interlopers, charlatans, pretenders without a glimmer of authority. The rights and powers they assume are mere presumption and pretense. The Creator alone hath power to convey the dominion of land and He hath done so as noted above, and all deeds and conveyances in derogation of this one or which conflict with its terms, are under this higher law, this divine law, which transcends all human laws and renders them void and of no effect. These false, presumptuous deeds may flourish for awhile but in the end they must and will go down in the conflict with truth and right and justice as contained and set forth in the higher law. For God is not a mocker. In the end His truth must and will prevail, if not by persuasion and the logic of reason, then by revolution and the logic of events.

This, the divine plan and purpose, is clearly revealed in the Scriptures and as fully and clearly set forth with added emphasis in Nature. By Nature's law, by the higher law, all men have equal rights to live upon and use the earth.

"The Lord hath done all things well, but man hath sought out many inventions." One of the most malignant, unjust, sinister, of these inventions is our system of land tenure, setting up private ownership of land, leading even to land monopoly, resulting in great riches and power for a few crafty, cunning, greedy exploiters; and corresponding poverty and helplessness of those thus bereft of their divine inheritance.

However much we try, we cannot bring this higher law, revealed in Nature and set forth in Scripture, into subjection to human customs and enactments of man-made law. It is of divine origin and authority and has right and power to set all human laws aside as it has often done and will do again, and again until our human laws are brought into harmony with it. When human laws clash with it, the result is trouble, injustice, cruelty, chaos and confusion such as prevail with us today.

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