

they can and will teach the mass of the people these truths, and lead the way to the reforms necessary to save civilization and democracy.

When will the University and the Church ally themselves with the people and lead them in their irrepressible conflict with "Privilege"?

"ARMAGEDDON" (?)

The Irrepressible Conflict Between the People and "Privilege"

A Plea for Economic Freedom

The Prerequisite for Industrial and International Peace

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Legalized privilege has caused the downfall of all previous civilizations and will surely destroy our present one, since like causes produce like effects in all natural philosophy and there is a natural law of economics just as there is a natural law of physics.

There have been civilizations in the past relatively as arrogant, rich, powerful and advanced in the arts and sciences as any of the present day, and they have crumbled to dust and disappeared. Let those who think that abolition of chattel slavery, freedom of thought, freedom of expression and potential political freedom, all of which have been enjoyed by English speaking peoples for the past

November 18, 1925

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sixty years, will prevent history repeating itself, reflect that power, unless intelligently and effectively applied, will not prevent disaster. The world has never known economic freedom, and in the light of history, we should realize that without it all other freedom is powerless to ward off destruction and is practically useless for preserving and perpetuating civilization and thus permitting mankind to reach its fullest and highest development. Many of the signs that preceded the dissolution of former civilizations are now present. Agriculture, upon which all must depend for sustenance, is blandly admitted to be necessarily an unremunerative occupation, in spite of the fact that it has in past times and under more unfavorable conditions of production, distribution and communication been a profitable industry. Because, under present economic conditions, agriculture is unremunerative and consequently fewer people are engaging in it and prices are high and many people have insufficient food and nourishment, our so-called economists and other pretentious experts are falling back on the long ago discredited and utterly absurd Malthusian doctrine. It never seems to occur to the experts, who are offering explanations which do not explain, that they constantly contradict themselves. In one

breath they say that the world is suffering from the fact that population has out-run subsistence, and in the next that over-production is the cause of our troubles. Over-production cannot exist unless and until everyone everywhere has not only all the food, clothing and shelter that they need, but all that they desire and all the luxuries they desire. Of course, such a condition never has existed and is not likely to until the millennium.

Another sign of social decadence (Prof. Richard T. Ely to the contrary notwithstanding) is the steadily and rapidly increasing tenancy both on farms and in towns and cities. Not only does history show that increase of tenancy accompanies decadence, but reason would indicate it; loss of tenure of land and ownership of homes in the country and crowding in tenements or apartments in the city necessarily mean loss of interest and responsibility in government and society and more or less demoralization and injury to children, the family and the home.

Our much-boasted transportation system has in many ways and places broken down. A large quantity of good food is destroyed annually because it cannot be transported to the people who need it, and such as is transported frequently

costs in transportation more than it is worth to the man who raised it and can only be consumed by the comparatively rich. In fact, products of agriculture and animals cost increasingly more, so that many of them are beyond the means of the vast majority of people, and yet farmers and stock raisers and dairy product producers get no more gross return for their products than they did forty years ago and their net return is generally a deficit. Why is it that, with the powers of production, distribution and communication enormously increased by invention, discovery and applied science, the elementary occupations of producing food, clothing, shelter and transportation have become precarious and unremunerative, when formerly they were prosperous? Railroad experts tell you in one breath that terminal charges are so high that there is no profit in hauling freight and passengers less than 100 miles, and in the next that busses and trucks are ruining the railroads by taking their short haul traffic away. The fact is that the earth is becoming too valuable for most people to live on, and that the complaint of the management of one of the large railway systems of Great Britain is true here and elsewhere, namely, that the land had become so valuable that the railroads could not afford to get the ad-

ditional land needed for right of way and terminals to permit the proper handling of the increased traffic. At the same time, high rents in the cities are making comfortable and decent living largely impossible and are paralyzing business. Mr. Charles Harris Whitaker, Editor of the Journal of the American Institute of Architects, in his book, "The Joke About Housing," truly says, "The question (housing) is before us, and it is not too much to say that the fate of the United States as a democracy and as a nation is dependent upon our ability to find the answer."

The Church has become alarmed at its loss of influence, but is doing nothing that should gain the confidence and respect of the people. The common man is not interested in wrangling over creeds, doctrine, ritual or "fundamentalism" (whatever that may mean), and time frittered away on such comparatively unimportant symptoms as divorce. He expects results, such results as better and easier living conditions through the opportunity to make use of God-given natural resources, and to profit by improvements due to applied science, discovery and invention.

The fact is that the faithlessness of the organized Church is being recognized; that it has always stood for legalized privilege; that it has ignored the

rights of the common man and has done nothing to show him how to understand fundamental economics and its intimate and inseparable relation to morals and moral laws; how to achieve economic freedom and so come into his own, and gradually achieve that God-like semblance which has been attributed to him, and realize the possibility of bringing the Kingdom of Heaven on earth as he was taught to pray for. Instead of teaching the God-given rights of man and his responsibilities, the organized Church has indulged in pious platitudes and attempted to teach happiness and contentment and morals under man-made laws granting special privileges to the few at the expense of the many, which necessarily made economic conditions such that happiness was impossible, morality difficult, and contentment an offence and blasphemy against the Almighty. The "Golden Rule" has been frequently invoked, but the "First and Great Commandment" has been entirely forgotten. Indeed, the words and teachings of Christ have been largely ignored and supplanted by creed, dogma, ritual, organization, and the eradication of all that was disagreeable to "Privilege" in Christianity so called.

The Church has never had the sense and courage to recognize and teach that

Christ was a profound economist as well as moralist; that He saw how inextricably interconnected and interdependent were sound economics and sound morals; that the second commandment was practically impossible and impotent without recognition of and obedience to the "first and great commandment." How can man love God, "The Great Abstract Spirit" but by obeying His laws, Nature's laws? In doing this must he not only observe and follow laws of hygiene, sanitation, conservation of all animal, vegetable, mineral and other natural resources, but see that man-made laws do not run counter to Natural Law, and must guarantee to every human being opportunity to use the earth and its natural resources to the extent needed to support the life of himself and the lives of those dependent upon him. Nature has assured this to every living creature, but man-made laws have deprived the vast majority of mankind of their birthright, and the more so-called civilized and progressive we are, the more complete and general the deprivation.

The Colleges and Universities are only in slight degree better than the Church, and have not the confidence of the people for the same reason. The kind of economics they teach is not only a "dismal science" but no science at all.

It is about where natural science was before the days of Galileo, Kepler and Newton, and consists principally of sophistry and jargon. So far as their departments of economics are concerned the Universities are, as a rule, vying with the Church in spreading misinformation, ignorance and prejudice and in upholding legalized privilege.

It all comes down to the "Land Question." This is not new. The Hebrew Jubilee Year was a crude attempt to solve it and prevent the earth and its natural resources from being monopolized and controlled by the few. Common right to the use of the earth has been recognized more or less by all savage and primitive peoples and civilizations in their early stages. The "Physiocrats" recognized it just before the French Revolution.

But never before Henry George was the relation between natural economic law and Christianity and civilization so clearly and logically revealed; and never before had a perfectly simple, easy, practical and effective method of insuring economic freedom been devised.

That value of land which exists because of the presence and activities of the community (what the economists term "economic rent"), being a socially made value, should naturally be taken by

society for social and governmental purposes, and all that labor and capital, ability and thrift produce should be retained as private property by the individual or individuals producing it. This is perfectly plain and simple; a recognition of rights and property as between mine, thine and ours.

Collecting the whole of economic rent for governmental and social purposes and abolishing all taxes on labor, capital, ability, thrift and their products, abolishing all tariffs and customs duties and other interferences with trade, will bring about such economic freedom as the world has never known, will insure for the first time in history a real recognition of true property rights and will, by complete freedom (not license), cause the gradual solution by evolution (not revolution or fiat) of practically all our economic or social ills. As a matter of fact, revolution or fiat have never accomplished anything worth while because they never have attacked or dealt with anything but symptoms, leaving causes untouched and unchanged.

There can be no sane antagonism between capital and labor; as well talk about antagonism between a farmer and his plow, a carpenter and his saw, a machinist and his hammer and wrench, or a banker and his safe deposit vaults.

Capital does not employ labor any more than a plow employs a farmer; capital is simply a useful tool of labor and is used by labor to enable it, labor, to work more efficiently. Legalized privilege is the common enemy of capital and labor, dictates to both the terms on which they may be employed, allows them only enough to keep them working, and fosters the idea that they can only profit at the expense of each other, well knowing that while they (capital and labor) are suspicious of each other or quarreling, that it (legalized privilege) can take the lion's share of what labor and capital produce.

Neither is it a question of employer and employee; we are all of us both employers and employees. The owners of a factory or mill do not give employment to labor; it is the consumers of what the factory or mill produces that give employment to the capital of the owners and to the labor of the operatives, from the president or manager to the lowest paid office boy or mill hand; the public employs bankers, physicians, lawyers, merchants, manufacturers and labor of all kinds and in turn is employed by them in various capacities in production, distribution, communication and innumerable other services. We must get out of the habit of thinking and saying that

certain individuals or capital give employment to people. It is not true. Civilized society is merely intelligently organized co-operation, to the end that the resultant efficiency will enable all to live more comfortably, easily, happily, and therefore naturally and morally.

Under our present system of taxation we permit billions of dollars of publicly created values to be privately appropriated, and then take billions of private property, created by the labor, capital, ability and thrift of individuals, for public and governmental purposes.

At best the cost of government must increase with population. This increase is automatically taken care of by the collection of rent,* because rent increases, not only with population, but by reason of the improvements due to invention, discovery and applied science, good government and every advance in civilization. Such collection of rent also equitably distributes its charges upon individuals in exact proportion to the benefits derived by each from the public.

By our present unjust, inequitable and unnatural tax system we throw out of adjustment our whole body politic, pre-

*Rent means economic rent or ground rent, the price paid for the advantages of a given location or site. What is paid for the use of a house or any improvement in, on or to land is not rent but interest.

vent its various organs from functioning naturally, and create our innumerable social and economic ills. We tax people off of the land, drive them into cities to earn a precarious livelihood and herd in slums which are breeding places for every kind of vice, crime and disease; increase the speculative value of land and cost of living to the point where the vast majority of people are unable to get the food necessary for proper nutriment of body and mind; encourage land speculation and monopoly, make it difficult to earn a decent living by industry and ability, and enable gamblers and speculators in the earth and its natural resources to reap large rewards.

It is from these causes that civilizations die. Mr. Charles Harris Whitaker, Editor of the Journal of American Architects, from his intensive study of the housing problem, learned that the land question was metaphorically as well as literally at the bottom of it, and that the taxation of land values* was the only solution. The late Major General William C. Gorgas, Surgeon General U. S. A., came to the same conclusion from his intensive study and practice of sanitation. Before the Clinical Society

*Taxation of land values a term frequently used by Henry George and his followers as a means of collecting rent.

of Surgeons at their 24th meeting, Washington, D. C., November 26th, 1915, he said, "I therefore urge for your consideration as the most important sanitary measure that can be at present devised a tax on land values." The Late Hon. Herbert Quick, born and brought up on a farm, farmer, lawyer, journalist, author and lifelong worker for bettering farm life and conditions, concludes in his book, "What is the Real Trouble with the Farmer?" that the taxation of land values is the only means by which farm lands can be brought into use and made sufficiently cheap to make farming profitable and enable farmers to own, work and live comfortably on their farms.

To save civilization, therefore, it is necessary to establish economic freedom. Economic freedom can only be established by freeing production and distribution. Freedom of production can only be attained by establishing equality of opportunity to the use of the earth and its natural resources. The only practical way of doing this, while insuring to each and every one the necessary tenure, is to recognize title to land but have government collect for governmental and social purposes socially created land values (economic rent) and abolish all taxes on labor, capital, thrift, ability and their products.

Freedom of distribution is a necessary corollary of the above; free trade between nations will come by abolishing all customs duties, tariff taxes and other interferences with trade; free domestic distribution will be brought about by freeing the land, and consequently freeing the railroads and other enfranchised means of transportation, communication and service from exploitation by the few at the expense of the many; for when public utilities are obliged to pay rent on the full site value of the land they occupy and are freed from taxes on equipment and improvements, the power to exploit them and the people they serve by watered stock and bond issues will cease.

The power to exploit the earth and its natural resources and the people living thereon, through private appropriation of economic rent, is one of the chief causes of international war. It is for this reason that the United States holds on to the Hawaiian and Philippine Islands, with resultant increased army and navy, and friction with Japan, whose "Captains of Industry" also would like to exploit these islands and their inhabitants. For the same reason is England in Egypt, India and East Africa, France in Algiers, Spain in Morocco, Italy in Africa, Japan in Korea, and practically all of them meddling with China. In every case in-

ternational envy and jealousy is engendered, to say nothing of the wrong done to the inhabitants and unrest created.

War can never be abolished until the earth and its natural resources are freed to the people living thereon, and their exploitation is automatically prevented by the whole of economic rent everywhere being collected for the benefit of the people of each country instead of by and for resident or absentee privilege holders. When this is done and absolute free trade established, practically all causes for international jealousy, friction and strife will be removed. Under such conditions a League of Nations can be truly effective and war prevented, but not otherwise.

To sum up: legalized privilege produces economic slavery; economic slavery produces social and industrial unrest and conflict at home, and international jealousies, friction and conflict such as we have just experienced in the World War; the private appropriation of economic rent is the legalized privilege of supreme importance, and unless and until it is abolished civilization after civilization must succumb. Henry George proposed and made clear a simple, easy and practical solution.

Our Colleges, Universities and Theological schools should so train men that