

A Word With You

"EXCEPT ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Unless we can see things in the clear way children do, we won't learn the truth. Adults are prone to lose this quality.

The reason is that people's minds become too cluttered with assumptions, prejudices, hearsay, emotions, scraps of experience and bits of facts. An accident, for instance, charges all these tangled wires, and people start thinking about what or who was to blame (anybody but me), who should sue whom, and how much — even before there is a clear picture of what happened. A child may notice only one detail of the accident, but he will give you that detail sharp and clear.

Some writer told of when he was a boy at school in a chemistry class. He was called upon to assist with an experiment at the table in front of the class. The teacher, his back to the table, faced the class and said, "Now the liquid is rising in the tube." The boy said, "No sir, it is not." The teacher paused, reddened and continued, "Now the liquid is rising in the tube." The boy protested, "But it isn't sir!" Whereupon the teacher turned around and slapped the boy's face. The liquid was *not* rising in the tube — some step had been missed — ah, but the teacher thought he knew better.

The same kind of cluttered thinking takes place among our experts analyzing the economy. We are presented

with the up-side-down problem of a rising rate of production, with demand not rising, so we have to make people buy more. If this were put to a child he would say, "But I don't want any more apples. Take them away!" Start the problem from there and we may get somewhere.

Time and again, a country (particularly a newly developing one) is reported to have an "unfavorable balance of trade," where more is imported than exported — and yet, "paradoxically," the economy is thriving. It has to be a "paradox" because of the false assumption that it's better to pay more than you get.

And frequently, one sees reference to a country where population is increasing — and "in spite of that," productivity is rising. It doesn't occur to the experts to consider it as a normal consequence.

A child could do much better with these problems. The current effort to teach economics to children may be a good sign, as it may make adults think like children.

I won't go so far as to say it's a good thing we all die, but it's a good thing that fresh brains and new pairs of eyes keep coming into the world. The things children see and the questions they ask may yet save us. So thank heaven for little girls, and boys, too!

—Robert Clancy

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The community, by its presence and activity, gives rental value to land, therefore the rent of land belongs to the community and not to the landowners. Labor and capital, by their combined efforts, produce the goods of the community — known as wealth. This wealth belongs to the producers. Justice requires that the government, representing the community, collect the rent of land for community purposes and abolish the taxation of wealth.

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