

Cleveland Conditions Badly Mixed

REV. FERNANDO HOOKER GROOM, D.D., of the Franklin Circle Christian Church of Cleveland, O., delivered a sermon, Feb. 9, on "The Tragedy of the Unemployed." He blamed overproduction, or what he called "mass production," also improved machinery; seasonal occupations; misfit workers; and lack of vocational training. He wanted employers to hire laborers, and actually declared that "factories own other people's jobs." According to the reverend gentleman, it is an "economic sin" for a citizen to paint his own house or shovel the snow from his sidewalk; he should hire it done. Even the lady of the house is almost committing a crime if she does her own house cleaning; she should sit back, fold her hands, and pay some other woman to keep the house clean. And he believes that every man is "his brother's keeper." Not a hint that poverty and unemployment may be due to social violation of a natural law. In short, the Rev. Fernando Hooker Groom, D.D., gave a fine exhibition of what David Gibson, publisher of the *Lorain (Ohio) Journal*, calls "economic illiteracy." The Rev. Fernando Hooker Groom said: "Charity is a necessity, of course, but many now receiving charity need a chance." The chance, however, according to this pulpit orator, is something to be given to the unemployed by citizens who are in good circumstances, and he does not perceive that that is merely another form of charity. He demands "public works on a vast scale when times are slack." He hints cautiously at the 5-day week, and says government should "stabilize employment," whatever that means.

An Ohio disciple of Henry George sent to Dr. Groom a copy of "Single Tax—What It Is and Why We Urge It;" also a respectful letter giving twelve brief paragraphic comments on his sermon.

On Lincoln's birthday, Dr. Groom, who was a war chaplain some years ago, addressed the Reserve Officers' Association, repeating much of what he said in his Sunday sermon. In the meantime, about 1,500 unemployed, organized by Communists, had marched to the City Hall to attend a council committee meeting on the question of providing jobs. As all could not squeeze into the committee room, the police tried to keep the disappointed ones from filling the City Hall entrance and to keep a lane open for others who had business in the building. This led to a riot in which twenty-two were injured—one at least seriously so. Dr. Groom said: "While rioters at City Hall yesterday were wrong in asking the city to pick jobs for them out of thin air, they were right in principle. Municipalities do have the unemployment problem to face just as they have the problem of disease. We have been fed up on too much prosperity talk when 2,300,000 men are without any sort of work. * * * During the war the government performed a wonderful service

in finding men for jobs, and now could do good by finding jobs for men."

There are said to be 1,500 reserve officers in Cleveland, and the association officials promised to circularize them, asking that they give jobs to the needy.

In the same newspapers bearing news of the meeting of the reserve officers, appeared a glowing article by the Chamber of Commerce, predicting a population for the city in 1950 of 2,000,000. One company would move from South Bend, Ind., to Cleveland, bringing 200 men. This brought joy to Cleveland land owners and speculators, but must have been depressing to South Bend's speculators.

One Ohio pulpiteer is boldly declaring that "we have too many people here;" the Communists are the busiest propagandists in Cleveland, and assert that the cause of poverty is to be found in private ownership of capital. Occasionally, a Single Taxer mildly calls attention to land speculation and harmful taxes. The group of ardent young Liberals in Cleveland is too excited about politics to take interest in the poverty problem, and changing the form of the city government seems to them more important than any other public question at present. The Cleveland Real Estate Board is interested in increasing population, in rising land values, and in reducing the amount of revenue derived by the land value tax. Ohio has a tax amendment pushed through by chambers of commerce and real estate boards, and a new law for taxing personal property will be made if the bankers and land speculators are able to agree. It will act as a handicap on capital and labor.

The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce proceeds on the theory that what Cleveland needs is more people, higher land values, lower taxes on land, and the open shop.

Cleveland's purveyors of daily news pay most attention to crimes, prohibition, politics and town booming. Editorially they take the side of the land speculators in taxation, and cannot be induced to discuss poverty and unemployment in any other than the extreme conventional style, which is inoffensive to those who own the land of the city and are able to make the masses pay them for the mere privilege of living and working.

What will happen as a result of the poor thinking, cowardice, rapacity, and apathy now seen in Cleveland? The city has no outstanding leader either for good or evil. It is a dangerous situation.

Communists ask the Associated Charities to maintain a 3-cent soup kitchen on the Public Square. The charity people reply that near the square are five restaurants in which a bowl of soup with meat can be had for 5 cents; also that the Associated Charities are feeding 400 men and women daily at their Wayfarer's Lodge, where there is "plenty of food for every hungry man or woman in the city." They have a 25 cent meal of soup, round steak, potatoes, bread and butter, rice pudding and coffee. If the applicant has no 25 cents, he can "chop a bit of wood"

and thereby earn a meal of soup, crackers and coffee. In spite of these generous (?) provisions, every man who is on the down-town streets frequently is stopped by appeals for assistance.

Organized Cleveland charity workers proceed on the assumption that theirs is a permanent profession for a constantly increasing number of citizens.

It is announced that Representative Chester C. Bolton, of Cleveland, will introduce into Congress a bill to create a National Employment Bureau, with at least eight branches. This is the political method favored by President Hoover. To the creation of government agencies and offices there is no end. It postpones the day when a fundamental remedy must be considered, and it supplies the boys with jobs which will never be abolished unless a political revolution comes along.

The Methodist Council of Cities was in session in Cleveland when the unemployed and the police had their fighting at the City Hall. The Council adopted resolutions calling for more officers and for federal legislation granting sickness, accident and unemployment insurance as well as old-age pensions "to our workers," and declaring that "any industry which would claim Christian commendation" must pay "a living wage for the entire year." They said that "in the industrial order envisaged by the church," unemployment would be eliminated. This is a hint at the abolition of poverty, and is the only encouraging sign Cleveland has had.

Cleveland clergymen are preaching the New Testament doctrine of love rather than the Old Testament idea of social justice. The rabbis, apparently, ignore the poverty problem, or talk of unemployment insurance.

John W. Love, popular columnist for the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, writes that in explaining the cause of poverty, others may talk of Malthus, Marx and Henry George; but he himself depends upon the "statistical method."

It may be an error to say that the hint at the abolition of poverty, given by the Methodist Council of Cities, is the only encouraging sign in Cleveland, for the fact that a prominent clergyman like the Rev. Fernando Hooker Groom, D.D., in spite of his muddled thinking, declares that the unemployed "need a chance," may direct some minds to asking: "What kind of a chance?" What Dr. Groom means by the word "chance" is clear, but it has a wider application. Yet Dr. Groom is the first of Cleveland's pulpiteers to have the courage to protest against "too much prosperity talk." His heart is in the right place, and his efforts may save some of the unemployed from extreme despair and desperation.

The Cleveland Engineering Society has jumped into the fierce discussion over unemployment, and 300 engineers held a meeting on the subject. One speaker advocates compelling wives to refrain from working for wages. Another blamed the schools "which failed to instruct boys and girls in the problems of life." Still another declared "that most of men unemployed could find or create

work for themselves if they tried hard enough." The meeting broke up in a chaos of opinions. Structures planned by engineers would be unstable if carried out with such bad thinking.

Barnett R. Brickner, popular rabbi of the Euclid Avenue Temple, discussed unemployment at a meeting of the Ohio Egg and Poultry Association. Is not that funny? He wants employment insurance and old-age pensions, and favored a government revolving fund to "provide work during economic depressions." It would "provide work," a good deal as the house wife makes work for herself when she spills grease on the kitchen floor. Rabbi Brickner said not a word as to how the government could get the money to "provide work," or how it ought to be obtained. All of the unemployment agitators dodge that delicate phase of the problem of "letting the government do it," and will say nothing displeasing to landowners and speculators.

How Henry George's Books are Distributed

WITH REFERENCE PARTICULARLY TO THE
PLACING OF BOOKS IN SCHOOLS
AND COLLEGES

EARLY IN 1926, when the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation first began its work, an unabridged edition of "Progress and Poverty" by Henry George, was contracted for, published under the Doubleday Page imprint, but sponsored and paid for by the Foundation. A thousand copies especially bound for library use were promptly placed in as many public and college libraries throughout the country.

Since that time, through the splendid cooperation of Single Taxers everywhere, who have purchased books in great quantities to give away to interested persons, or perhaps to sell at nominal cost; through the work of the Foundation in interesting professors in schools and colleges; through the Annie C. George Prize Essay contests and the Hussey Fund contests, and finally through a systematic advertising programme, there has sprung up a steady demand for "Progress and Poverty," as well as the other books available from the Foundation. Last July a fine, 50th Anniversary Edition of the unabridged work was brought out under the Foundation's own imprint, and the sales and donations have been such that a second printing of this edition is now about to be launched.

In January, 1928, the popular book "Significant Paragraphs from Progress and Poverty" by Henry George, compiled by Professor Harry Gunnison Brown, and prefaced with Professor John Dewey's remarkable INTRODUCTION, came off the press. As Mr. Fairchild explains elsewhere this little book meets the requirements of many