

Theological evasions of social and economic issues are largely responsible for warped public opinion and the delay of essential reforms. In the end, the churches themselves suffer in the loss of the respect of the more virile amongst the masses. Would it not be better to face with intelligence and honesty of purpose the charge levelled by George against our fundamental social maladjustment?

"Our primary social adjustment, says George, is a denial of justice. In allowing one man to own the land on which and from which other men must live, we have made them his bondsmen in a degree which increases as material progress goes on. This is the subtle alchemy that in ways they do not realize is extracting from the masses in every civilized country the fruits of their weary toil; that is instituting a harder and more hopeless slavery in place of that which has been destroyed; that is bringing political despotism out of political freedom, and must soon transmute democratic institutions into anarchy."

"It is this that turns the blessings of material progress into a curse. It is this that crowds human beings into noisome cellars and squalid tenement houses; that fills prisons and brothels; that goads men with want and consumes them with greed; that robs women of the grace and beauty of perfect womanhood; that takes from little children the joy and innocence of life's morning.

"Civilization so based cannot continue. The eternal laws of the universe forbid it."

Nearly forty years have elapsed since George wrote the above. Can it be affirmed that the Christian churches, as a whole, have awakened to the reality and gravity of his indictment?

Juvenile Delinquency and the "Cause"

THAT there is much juvenile delinquency in the world, as well as adult delinquency, is admitted. It is admitted, too, that for both some remedy must be found. The only trouble appears to be that the authorities and "experts" are not agreed on the remedy.

There is a Juvenile Protective Association in Chicago. It has recently printed as the result of its investigation a little pamphlet now before us, entitled, "Junk Dealing and Juvenile Delinquency."

The junk business has attained, it will be of interest to our readers to know, immense proportions, aggregating something like two billions annually. In Chicago the business has been compelled to pay heavy taxes, or license fees, in one case amounting to \$1,000. Laws forbidding the purchase of junk from minors have been passed, and heavy penalties imposed for their violation. Many junk dealers have been found operating without licenses.

It has been found that the purchase of junk by dealers from minors is a contributing cause of juvenile delinquency. The boys go in search of lead pipe, milk bottles and the refuse to be found in alleys, and some are tempted to more

serious depredations to secure stuff salable to the junk dealer.

A "study" of 100 boys engaged in selling junk to dealers is presented. Of these sixty-seven per cent. admitted securing their salvage from sources that necessitated stealing in order to get it. Thirty-three per cent. therefore ought to have been immune from any "study" at all—they are apparently normal boys, perhaps a little more industrious than the average and eager to earn a few pennies. Their field of operation are city dumps, meat markets and stock yards.

The "study" of these boys showed how they used the proceeds derived from the sale of junk. 62 went to the "movies," 47 bought candy, 16 showed a liking for ice cream. Only 16 went in for tobacco, and only one confessed to a liking for draw poker. One, evidently a captain of industry in embryo, utilized his profits to establish a junk business of his own. It was shown that every one of the hundred boys patronized the "movies" at some time and forty-six went to vaudeville shows.

It was found that 52 of the boys left school at 14, and that 48 left school to begin work. The school record of only six of the boys was "very poor," that of 54 was "poor," while 17 were "good," and only one "excellent." We find that the total of one hundred boys are exceeded in this count, but that need not interest us. The point that occurs to us is that the school record of these youngsters, while not reassuring, is far from hopeless. Perhaps a record of any other one hundred boys from families of the same social strata would disclose a school record not greatly superior.

Now we come to the really vital part of this "study," that which concerns the wages of the fathers, which ranged from \$6.25 to \$40.00 per week, the average wage for 75 being \$18.30. The annual income of at least 25 per cent. of these families, the Report admits, "falls below what is required to maintain a condition of physical fitness, to say nothing of proper cultural advantages." 25 per cent. of the heads of the families were natives of this country.

This kind of "social study" has a fearful fascination for a certain order of mind which never looks below the surface. When O. J. Milliken, Superintendent of Chicago and Cook County School for Boys, says, "Properly regulate the junking business and moral delinquency of boys will disappear," he is talking nonsense, and a very dangerous kind of nonsense. For juvenile delinquency is an effect, and the selling of junk to dealers by these unfortunate children is due to the deeper causes that make delinquents of both adults and juveniles. When we read the report of the Juvenile Court of St. Louis, Mo., that fifteen per cent. of juvenile delinquency is caused by this practice, we wonder what can be assigned as the cause of the delinquency of the remaining 85 per cent., which according to Mr. Milliken will disappear along with the fifteen per cent. when the business of junk dealing is "properly regulated."

Of course, it is a problem of poverty and not of junk dealing at all. The incomes of these families are, for the most part, miserably insufficient. These kiddies are acting in

obedience to a perfectly natural instinct. They would "have life and have it more abundantly."

"Cribbed, cabined and confined" in their narrow little lives they seek to break their bonds. The great world of romance, of light and beauty, the world which they have heard of but vaguely, opens to their view in little glimpses at the moving picture shows and vaudeville houses. They strain at the bonds that hold them to their pitiful surroundings and sordid lives, these insufficiently nourished little souls!

And the men who "study" them, pursuing their "studies" like anatomists, arranging and classifying these boys into "problems," are blind to all this. They either do not or will not see. Preposterous and purblind, they go their way, surveying their "specimens" under a microscope as if they were problems in chemistry.

But they are not wholly blind. They admit in a single paragraph which, after we are almost through reading, looks up at us in a bashful, unobtrusive way, that in the case of 75 fathers of these boys from whom facts regarding their income could be gleaned, "such income was at least 25 per cent. too small to insure the maintainance of decent home conditions." Such is the language. Then why go further? The "study" is complete. Yet in spite of this isolated flash of illumination, the momentary sputtering of a candle in the cimmerian gloom, what do our readers suppose is the remedy offered?

It is to municipalize the junk business. Does it not recall the heaving mountain and the little mouse?

The Growing Single Tax Sentiment Calls for the New Party

SOME of our readers are not aware, perhaps, of the extent to which Labor parties and Labor organizations have endorsed the Single Tax. It is true that most of these platform declarations leave a good deal to be desired; they represent for the most part compromises between the out-and-out advocates of pure Single Tax principles, and the men who desire merely to limit land monopoly.

The declarations, however, are significant of the growing sentiment in our direction. We quote:

"There should be provided a progressive increase in taxes upon land values of such a nature as to render it unprofitable to hold land without putting it to use, to afford a transition to greater economic equality.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR.

"We maintain that the existence of idle land and idle labor, where the means of subsistence are inadequate to supply the proper needs of society, constitutes travesty on intelligence and common sense, and, in order that such a strange paradox shall no longer exist in a civilized community, we insist that it is the duty of our government, national, State and local, to take immediate steps to democratize the land by taxing for public purposes the speculative value of land."

OHIO STATE FEDERATION OF LABOR.

"Payment of the current expenses of government by a system of taxation of land values which will stimulate rather than retard production.—One of Labor's "Fourteen Points," adopted by the LABOR CONFERENCE at Chicago, Ill.

"To provide sufficient revenue we favor the use of revenue derived from a system of taxation on land values which will stimulate rather than retard production."

AMERICAN LABOR PARTY OF GREATER NEW YORK.

These planks are the straws showing the way the wind is blowing. But they are buried in heaps of rubbish. They are "sops to Cerebus." But they reveal a body of Single Tax sentiment to which it is desirable or expedient to make concession. They confirm the conviction that we must now make our own appeal in terms which admit of no compromise. The day of the Single Tax Party is here. The men and women of the Convention of June 28 have blazed the right trail at last. The event is epochal.

Ignorance or Moral Obliquity?

"No religious books of the past prophets speak of the economic question, while this problem has been thoroughly solved in the teachings of Baha'o'llah." (Tract No. 9, page 10, distributed at the Bahai Congress, New York.)

Only ignorance of the teachings of the Jewish prophets or reliance upon the ignorance of the audience can account for such an amazing statement as the above quoted. The Old Testament, to mention no other religious books, is saturated through and through with the conception of a divine justice satisfied only when made manifest in every human relation—including those we call economic.

Turning from this unworthy Bahai retrospect, let us refresh our sense of justice with a few lines from the remarkable tribute paid by an American seer to the profound economic insight and wisdom of the Hebrew, Moses:

"Trace to its root," said Henry George, in his lecture upon Moses, "the cause that is thus producing want in the midst of plenty, ignorance in the midst of intelligence, aristocracy in democracy, weakness in strength—that is giving to our civilization a one-sided and unstable development—and you will find it something which this Hebrew statesman three thousand years ago perceived and guarded against. Moses saw that the real cause of the enslavement of the masses of Egypt was what has everywhere produced enslavement—the possession by a class of the land upon which and from which the whole people must live. He saw that to permit in the land the same unqualified ownership that by natural right attaches to the things produced by labor, would be inevitably to separate the people into the very rich and the very poor, inevitably to enslave labor—to make the few the masters of the many, no matter what the political forms; to bring vice and degradation, no matter what the religion.

"And with the foresight of the philosophic statesman who legislates not for the need of a day, but for all the future, he sought, in ways suited to his times and conditions, to