A NEW DEPARTURE

Gideons Army

THE "NEW AGE" PRESS ASSOCIATION

Notice

We advise all readers of "The New Age" to resolve themselves into members of "The New Age Press Association." This week the "Association" has borrowed four pages from the "Press," "The New Age" is half its usual size. So the "Association" owes its members those pages—or their equivalent.

The "Association" proposes to pay its debt by issuing (a) printed monographs for general distribution; (b) written articles for publication in Social Credit journals; (c) confidential information for the guidance of the editors of those journals.

Gideons Army.

Thirty-two thousand Israelites volunteered to fight the Midianites. Under a test twenty-two thousand owned up that they would sooner go home. Under a second test nine thousand seven hundred and three thousand showed that, subconsciously, they were of the same disposition. There were left three hundred warriors to face the Midianite hosts.

What happened is recorded in the Book of Judges. The three hundred lifted lanterns and lifted voices. And the Midianite army fought itself to defeat.

That is exactly how the Money Monopoly is going to be brought down.

Douglas is the Lantern and "The New Age" is the Shout.

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

The Tithe Bill.

Do not things happen conveniently for the bankers? While the whole electorate and members of Parliament were devouring the sensational evidence elicited in the Law Courts last Thursday, the House of Commons was giving a second reading to the Tithe Bill. We wonder what percentage of the public and their elected representatives paid any attention to this Bill, or have done so since. Even in normal times the characteristic of Parliamentary shrivelledness is manifest in regard to legislation in which the bankers and their expert bureaucrats are concerned; so much more must this be so in circumstances which create a dramatic counterattraction. Most legislation is dry stuff at any time, particularly financial legislation—which is why, as Lord Hewart complained, the bureaucrats have so often succeeded in slipping clauses into Bills and getting them enacted without examination, with the result that our noble legislators do not realise what these clauses imply.

* * *

On the day we speak of nobody had a thought to think a word to say—and no newspaper had a headline to spare—except to deal with the dramatic appearance of Mr. J. H. Thomas at the Inquest and the intriguing "inside stories" with which his name had been rightly or wrongly involved. Really, Parliament ought to have been adjourned until the circus was over, or at least been given some minor subject which could be debated perfunctorily without danger.

* * *

The Times of May 14 contains the report of the debate and a leading article on it. The principle of the Tithe Bill is that of substituting the State for the Titheowner as the creditor of the Tithepayer. The result of this is to shift the burden of the Tithepayer's liability from his hands to his person. Tithe-rent becomes a tithe-tax, and...
the tithe-taxpayer becomes part and parcel of the general body of taxpayers whose lives are considered the debtor to all, and therefore not entitled to the privilege of limited liability in respect of his debt.

Another result is that the process of tithe-rent, now to be tithe-tax, are no longer to be forgotten. Provided with specific claims by the Church and/or other tithe-owning bodies, nor are to be formally hypothecated to specific possessors. Like motorists’ contributions to the road fund, landlords will be swallowed up in the national revenue, and henceforth the tithepayer who used to collect them will lose their identity as such by being enrolled in the general body of bondholders, leaving their statutory dividend from the State.

Mr. Walter Elliot pointed out that the Bill would lift from the Church the odium which she has hitherto incurred by having to move the machinery of law to recover her dues from impatient tithepayers. He suggested that whatever grievances were felt on either side about the material changes to be brought about by the Bill, they were more or less justly compensated. The Times remained firm in its belief that the Bill is as good as any other that could be devised and obtained, having regard to the number and nature of the conflicting interests involved. We can accept this as probably being true, and, if true, as part of the general controversy—that is to say, all controversy between parties who accept (knowingly or not) the criteria of feasibility imposed by the Money Monopolists on the ideology and ingenuity of would-be practical politicians.

But in entering this proviso we are reminding our national rulers that controversy cannot be confined within the limits which the Money Monopolists are seeking to impose upon the tribute of money is a numerous, influential, and fast-increasing body of thought which challenges the standing orders under which parties to questions of concrete problems are driven to barren compromises. As we pointed out in another article on the Tithe problem to which we refer in a footnote, it is as feasible for tithepayers to fulfil their obligations to the community without hardship in terms of money to-day as it was for them to do so in terms of commodities long ago. What makes it seem impossible is the fact that statesmen accept as normal laws the arbitrary conclusions of the Money Monopolists. These conventions amount to a code where this law is being correctly describable as the Law of the Physical Feasibility. Markets act accordingly—neither "reflecting" or "fulfilling." That is the same for two "Laws" are in conflict with each other, whereas it is unimportant that they not be complementary to each other—or, as the phrase would say, functions of each other. It should be a self-evident proposition to the least sophisticated layman that any objective that can be attained by the absence of money can be attained in the presence of money.

What do people want money for anyway? Of what service is a monetary system or notation? People want money to buy something, or of what is produced. And the only essential use of money is to measure the relative size of the share. If all production is composed of one commodity, say bread, the total number of loaves that could be counted, and tickets marked "One Quartem Loaf" could be issued to people in varying numbers according to the number of loaves each was entitled to. Each ticket would represent the same fraction of all the tickets issued. As one loaf would represent all the loaves available, there would be no need for varying forms, and the products are variously measured in measures of length, weight, volume, etc., each ticket must bear some expression of the fractional share which enables each to know how much of any other item out of the multitude of items will be able to get for the ticket. The expression "One Found" fulfills this purpose because producers of anything at all spend pounds in making it, and can calculate how many it will cost fractionally when they make them they deliver for one pound. If we were to make more practically applicable notation for measuring how much we could get for our ticket we should have to use documents showing stating that each of them entitled the holder to the expression "one pound (weight) of bread or two yards of that or half a gallon of something else or one hundredth part of a bicycle—and so on. By using money tokens we get over this difficulty and are able to measure our total production by counting the total tokens paid out, and in each case we can calculate the quantity of anything at all his share comes to by counting the tokens he has available to spend.

Nevertheless the principle on which the money system works—or rather, is capable of working, and is vaguely supposed to be—just as simple as the hypothesis one-leaft-ticket system just mentioned, where, for instance, total production was to be 1,000 loaves and total tickets were 1,000. Each ticket would represent an equal amount of bread if the whole community's "income." The holder of a ticket (or more than one) might not be aware of the fractional or relative measure of it, nor would he have to; but he would know the number of loaves he could get, at any rate, is part of the system that practically interests him.

Our object in stating this elementary information is to emphasise the following facts:

1. That money is not indispensable to a community, but is a convenience.
2. That the value of a money system does not exist in the money, but in the system—i.e., in the rules which a community makes for counting up its production of wealth and counting out their members.
3. That rules can be devised so that consumable goods can be drawn upon as fast as it can be produced.
4. That if under any rules this cannot be done the community desires to do it, the obstacles lies in the rules, and can be removed by correcting the rules.

The community in Britain to-day is facing the problem indicated in the last of these points. In trying to devise an adequate system to count the wealth of the maximum rate, it is trying to do so under a set of financial rules which have the effect (so far as they are obeyed) of preventing the achievement of that purpose.

The community is constantly trying to enlarge the flow of cross-products in its fields, factories and workshops. It is constantly trying to enrich the flow of cross-products into houses, but in its counting houses it is trying to count and convert into an inelastic trial pool. It is thus trying to make the wealth account

and inaccessible to the individual at the same time. Thus the evidence of this dilemma is to be seen in the conflicting doctrines of monetary saving or spending by the individual. Saving involves leaving wealth inside the production system: spending involves taking it out. Hence the compromise-doctrine of wise spending (or saving) which, if it means anything at all, requires the community to draw out of industry the least proportion of wealth on which it can support itself. In brief, it requires the community to carry the practice of abstaining up with a degree or so of the flashpoint of general civil disorder.

Adversity makes strange bedfellows. So does per rectiveness. And nothing exemplifies per rectiveness so strikingly as the spectacle of a community endeavouring to follow two mutually destructive lines of conduct at one and the same time. Yet the per rectiveness does not lie in the community, because the community believe that the rules of the counting house are correctly devised to fulfil the purposes of the factory. The per rectiveness lies in those in the community (but not of the community) who impose the counting-house rules on the community knowing in advance to involve the frustration of the community's purpose. Those who made the rules in the name of the community—deceivers—may be generally described as the banking community; and the visible agency which conveys, while facilitating, their deception, can be identified with the "Treasury," the "Revenue," or, as the man-in-the-street would look at it, the "Government.

And who are the strange bedfellows? They consist of the curious assortment of people who, from time to time have revealed by their acts the fact that the whole community is in the flashpoint danger zone of political temperature (or temper, which expression is the same analogy). These acts have consisted, variously, in (a) changing the law, (b) breaking the law, (c) seeking loopholes in the law, (d) inciting others to resist the requirements of the law in the foregoing and other ways. And to the curious nature of the assortment of these "people" that we mention first the tithepayers who, in various parts of the country have resisted in part by forcibly impeding agents of the law in the execution of their duties. The people are more or less representative in the same category of bread-sellers whose names are Mr. Clarence Hardy, Lord Rylinsart, Mr. Leopold Harris, and more so when room is found for the numerous body of forgers, tax dodgers, smugglers and grab-raders and the more room still for all those political agitators such as are to be found in the ranks of Communist and Fascist alike. Yet all these people, notwithstanding the fact that the division between their minds and their immediate objectives, and between the falsification of their unselfishness, were resisting the rules of the counting house. The fact that in doing what they did, they risked or incurred the penalties arises from the fact that the rules of the counting house have been woven into the law of the land. The fraudulent deceit of the private Money Monopoly has been given legal sanction by representative Governments, and penalties attached to receipt into the money system of avoiding or escaping the resultant dilemma of cross-purpose of which we have spoken. A code of law which embodies and tries to enforce two mutually irreconcilable basic principles is a denial of everything that we mean by law—it is a code which can no more be tolerated by human intelligence than it can be operated by human ingenuity. The attempt to enforce it is an affront to conscience and an incitement to violence. There can be no greater injustice than to prescribe, under penalties, the performance of an impossible task. And there can be no greater aggravation of that injustice than to conceal from the would-be performers of the task the fact that the attempt is impossible. This concealment has the consequence that when the inevitable dilemmas confront the people they suspect the case to lie in defects of human nature; they fly apart into suspicious, resentful and group-seeking individuals charged with the perpetuating progress towards what they believe to be an attainable end, but which in truth is unattainable under the existing law, and for the reason that the designers of the law do not intend that end to be reached.

And thus it comes about that we have tithepayers indulging the Church with respect, and registering their resentment by symbolic occupancies of Roodery gardens where they proclaim against Roodery sin—frightening the inmates of the house, though granting Nonconformists outside the hedge who have to do without tithes. What a diabolical complex of strain created—a group of persons exclusively by their own nature incapable of handling the present world, and even on the other hand, there is no such question as that the tithepayers can show that they, too, need the money, and for purposes equally commendable, though of a different order of community. In this dilemma there is nothing else to be done, if any change is to be made at all, than to get both parties to renounce something, and to bring in a third party to mitigate the renunciation.

This is what is being done by the Tithe Bill. This Bill is a radical reform—and in the nature of an award—the real arbiters being the banking community acting behind the Government and the Treasury. Readers will note the significance of a headline in The Times report of the debate in the House of Commons “The Treasury must be protected.” That amounts to saying that the rules of the counting-house rules must be respected and honored. This new law is surprising to read, as anyone can in the report, that no interested group in the House likes the Bill, or if it likes it, only insofar as, and because, it penalizes other groups. But it is surprising to read that the House, in accepting the Bill in principle, was chiefly motivated by the Government’s implicit challenge to critics to suggest a better alternative. (If ‘O’ Bill knows of a better Bill in another ‘ole let ‘im go and fetch it.)

The House was also influenced by the commercial appeal to it in two significant ways: firstly, the two-year work of the
experts who had gone into the problem to be wasted.
Readers who know who these experts are and whose
directions they serve under will not be so impressed as
was the House. There is nothing that could be wasted
with so much profit to the public as the time and labour
spent by the Money Monopoly in consolidating and ex-
tending its control of the affairs of State.

That is what the Tithe Bill does. Under its financial
provisions the " Exchequer " (which is the same thing
as the Treasury, the Bank of England, the " Big Five,"
the City, the Money Market, the Stock Exchange, and
the Insurance Combine—the directorates of which insti-
tutions are closely interlocked) is to buy up all tithe-
owners rights for the sum of £75,000,000 to be paid in
the form of 3 per cent. guaranteed Government stock
redeemable at par in sixty years' time. For reasons to
appear later we identify the Church and her functions
with these rights, and exclude persons who own tithes
and use the revenues for secular purposes of a non-edu-
cational character. What does the Church gain? She
seeks the security of a constant revenue, and escapes
the odium of being directly associated with its collec-
tion. It was pointed out in the debate that there was a
tendency, were the old system to continue, of putting
the sporadic resistances of tithepayers to coalesce and boil
up into a general strike of national dimensions. So, in
terms of dependability of income and of moral rehabilita-
tion the Church's gains are real. But she has had to
pay for them financially. Her income has been scaled
down, and it ceases at the end of sixty years. She will
be obliged to economise on her expenditure forthwith.
Yet, so far she may be content with her bargain.

But now we come to something deeper than the
revenue problem. It is something which we first fo-
shadowed in our article, " The Passing of Anglican-
ism," five years ago. In that article we pointed out that
the developments in wireless, newspaper, and cinema
educational publicity were making possible the super-
session of the Christian pulpit altogether—and of the
 Anglican pulpit particularly. We showed, but in other
words, that for the purposes of the Money Monopoly
the only religion required in this country was one which
limited its teaching to the end of making men good
citizens of the State. Once the citizen was trained into
the habit of regarding the interests of the State as
supreme, and of identifying these interests with the rules
of the counting house, then, for the purposes of the
Money Monopoly, that citizen's religious education was
complete, and any spiritual refinement or extension of it
superfluous, not to say potentially dangerous, because
of the insistence of Christianity on the humanistic doc-
trine of the primacy of the individual over the group—
or rather over ascetic institutions affecting to repres-
ent the group. The religious conscience that the
Money Monopoly wanted to cultivate was a conscience
purgd of humanism, one which measured justice by
financial statistics. For this purpose the secular agencies
just mentioned were quite adequate, or could be made so
by the provision of new financial capital. We fores-
shadowed that the specific privileges of the Anglican
Church would be attacked by the City in the same way
as had been those of the Landed Aristocracy.

Very well. The Tithe Bill constitutes such an attack.
It imposes on the Anglican Church the assignment of
Anglican property to the Money Monopoly. In theory
the assignment could be revoked at the end of sixty
years provided that the guaranteed stock were not re-
deemed. But the Money Monopoly can always redeem
what it wants to, hence the assignment is irrevocable.
What is the implication of this? That, whereas
Anglican property is locked up as inalienable the stock
which is to be issued in purchase of it is not inalienable.
The profound import of this can be illustrated as fol-
loows: namely, if a particular Anglican church were
to be offered for sale for conversion into a cinema (or
even for the use of a Nonconformist denomination) there
would be an outcry immediately against such a flagrant
attempt to surrender inalienable property and to divorce
its functions from their original purpose; but if a block
of guaranteed stock representing the security of that
church were to be realised in the Stock Market, the
same surrender would be made, though not with the
same immediate consequences, and nobody could protest
because nobody would know what had happened.

We are, of course, not suggesting that this narrow
illustration does more than exhibit the distinction. And
that is sufficient for our purpose, which is to point out
the dangerous possibilities attaching to the specific
attachment of Anglican properties to stocks which can be
sold or pledged like any other gilt-edged securities.
So far as we have scrutinised the Bill there is no obstacle
to the property of the Church of England becoming the
property of the Bank of England and its Big Five
satellites. If there is we shall be glad to hear it.

Someone may ask: " What difference would that
make, since the Church's administration of the property
could not be directly interfered with by the legal owners
of the securities? " The narrow answer is, no differ-
ence immediately. The danger is progressive. In the
first place the adequacy of the fixed collective income
granted to the Church depends upon the purchasing
power of money. If there is a rise in price-levels the
Church will have either to retrench on her services or
to borrow on or sell her securities. In either of
the two latter alternatives she will have to retrench eventual-
ly, because she will suffer a diminution of income.
She cannot borrow without paying interest (not to speak
of repaying the loan), and she cannot live on her capital.

A further factor is that she cannot control the market
value of the stock she is to be paid with, and therefore
has no guaranteed borrowing powers.

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