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THE NEW AGE

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A NEW DEPARTURE Gideon's 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.

Gideon's 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 of the remaining ten 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 Tithes 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 absentmindedness is manifest in regard to legislation in which the bankers and their expert bureaucrats are concerned; so how much more must this be so in circumstances which create a dramatic counter-attraction. 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

until they see them successfully invoked and adroitly construed by some departmental official in some court of law before a protesting but impotent Judge, who finds that matters which properly belong to his field of jurisdiction have been transferred to a departmental authority. (Cf. The Ministry of Health's usurpation of the power to establish and punish the "crime" of "excessive prescription.")

On the day we speak of nobody had a thought to think or 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 Inquiry 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 basis of the Tithepayer's liability from his land to his person. Tithe-rent becomes a tithe-tax, and

* Readers interested in the Tithes agitation are referred to issues of THE NEW AGE dated May 28, 1931 ("The Passing of Anglicanism"), August 24, 1933 ("The Tithe War"), and May 3, 1934 ("The Tithe Bill"). The last comments were written about a leading article entitled "The Tithe Bill" in The Times of April 24, 1934.]

the tithe-taxpayer becomes part and parcel of the general body of taxpayers whereof each person is 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 proceeds of tithe-rent, now to be tithe-tax, are no longer to be formally identified with specific claims by the Church and/or other tithe-owning bodies, nor are to be formally hypothecated to specific purposes. Like motorists' contributions to the road fund, the proceeds will be swallowed up in the national revenue, and thenceforth the titheowners who used to collect them will lose their identity as such by being enrolled in the general body of bond-holders, drawing 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 impecunious 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* remarks that the Bill is as good as any other that could be devised and operated, having regard to the number and nature of the conflicting interests involved. We can accept this as probably being true, and, if true, as putting an end to all 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 nominal rulers that controversy cannot be contained within the limits which the Money Monopolists are seeking to impose on it. There is a numerous, influential, and fast-increasing body of thought which challenges the standing orders under which parties to debates on concrete problems are driven to barren compromises. As we pointed out in former articles on the Tithe problem to which we refer in a footnote, it is as feasible for tithepayers to fulfil their obligations to titheowners 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 infeasible is the fact that statesmen accept as natural laws the arbitrary conventions of the Money Monopolists. These conventions amount to a code of law, this law being correctly describable as the Law of Financial Infeasibility overriding the Law of Physical Feasibility. Mark the term; "over-riding"—not "reflecting" or "fulfilling." That is to say the two "Laws" are in conflict with each other, whereas it is unthinkable that they should not be complementary to each other—or, as the physicist 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 in the absence of money can be attained in the presence of money.

What do people want money for anyhow? Of what service is a monetary system or notation? People want money to buy some share or other of what is produced. And the only essential use of money is to measure the relative size of the share. If all production consisted of one commodity, say bread, the total number of loaves could be counted, and tickets marked "One Quarter 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 of all the loaves available. But as production takes all sorts of forms, and the products are variously quantified in measures of length, weight, volume, etc., each ticket must bear some expression of the fractional share which enables the holder to know how much of any one thing out of the multitude of things on offer he is able to get for the ticket. The expression "One Pound" fulfils this purpose because producers of anything at all spend pounds in making it, and can calculate how much—or what fraction—of all that they make they can deliver for one pound. If we did not use this universally applicable notation for measuring how much we could get for our ticket we should have to use documents a mile long stating that each of them entitled the holder to, e.g., "one pound (weight)" of this 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 up our total production by counting the total tokens paid out; and each of us can calculate what 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 work—is just as simple as that of the hypothetical one-loaf-ticket system just mentioned, where, for instance, total production were to be 1,000 loaves and total tickets were 1,000. Each ticket would represent one-thousandth of the production, also one-thousandth of the 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, which is the part of the system that practically interests him.

Our object in dishing up 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 reside 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 shares to its members.
3. That rules can be devised so that consumable wealth can be drawn upon as fast as it can be produced, and
4. That if under any rules this cannot be done, whereas the community desires to do it, the obstacle 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 facts. In trying to divide out collective wealth for the benefit of the individual at 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 engaged in a game of fundamental cross-purposes: in its fields, factories and workshops it is constantly trying to enlarge the flow of wealth out of industry into homes, but in its counting house it is trying to dam the flow and convert it into an industrial pool. It is thus trying to make wealth accessible

and inaccessible to the individual at one and the same time. 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 abstinence up within a degree or so of the flashpoint of general civil disorder.

Adversity makes strange bedfellows. So does perversity. And nothing exemplifies perversity so convincingly as the spectacle of a community endeavouring to follow two mutually destructive lines of conduct at one and the same time. Yet the perversity does not lie in the community, because the community believe that the rules of the counting house are correctly designed to fulfil the purposes of the factory. The perversity lies in those in the community (but not of the community) who impose the counting-house rules on the community knowing them to involve the frustration of the community's purpose. Those who do this—those fraudulent deceivers—may be generally described as the banking community: and the visible agency which conceals, 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 sane analogy). These acts have consisted, variously, in (a) challenging 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.

As to the curious nature of the assortment of these people, it will be appropriate to the subject on which these "Notes" are being written if we mention first the tithepayers who, in various parts of the country, have resisted distraint by forcibly impeding agents of the law in the execution of their duties. They would probably resent being placed in the same category of bedfellows as M. Marang, Mr. Clarence Hatry, Lord Kylsant, Mr. Leopold Harris, and more so when room is found for the numerous body of forgers, tax-dodgers, smash-and-grab raiders and the like, and more room still for idealistic rough-house political agitators such as are to be found in the ranks of Communism and Fascism alike. Yet, all these people, notwithstanding the wide diversity between their motives, their immediate objectives, and the heinousness of their unlawfulness, were resisting the rules of the counting house. The fact that, in doing what they did, they risked or incurred legal 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 all devices to which citizens are tempted to resort in order to resolve the resulting dilemma of cross-purposes of which we have spoken. A code of law which embodies and tries

to enforce two mutually irreconcilable basic principles of conduct 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 it is impossible. This concealment has the consequence that when the inevitable dilemmas confront the people they suspect the cause to lie in defects of human nature: they fly apart into suspicious, resentful groups, each charging the others with obstructing 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 indicting the Church with rapacity, and registering their resentment by symbolic occupations of Rectory gardens where they declaim against Rectorial tyranny—frightening the inmates of the house, though gratifying Non-conformists outside the hedge who have to do without tithes. What a diabolical complex of stray currents of resentment and of futile visitations of retribution—currents which, if the contestants only knew, should be, and could be, directed to the distant source of all the trouble.

And what is the trouble? The Church (by which we mean titheowners generally) has need of more money from tithepayers than the latter can afford to pay. There is no question that the Church can prove her need—that she can show that all the money (and more) she gets is being put, without extravagance, to purposes which the general public would commend as useful to society. But, on the other hand, there is also no question that the tithepayers can show that they, too, need the money, and for purposes equally commendable, though of a different order of usefulness to society. 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 really an arbitration 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's* report of the debate saying that the basic principle of the financial provisions of the Bill is that "the Treasury must be protected." That amounts to saying that the rules of the counting-house must be respected. In view of how those rules work it is not 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 penalises other groups! Nor is it surprising to read that the House, in accepting the Bill in principle, was chiefly actuated by the Government's implicit challenge to critics to suggest a better alternative. (If ol' Bill knows of a better Bill in another 'ole let 'im go and fetch it.) The House was also influenced by the Government's appeal to it not to allow the two years' 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 extending 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 institutions 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-educational character. What does the Church gain? She gains the security of a constant revenue, and escapes the odium of being directly associated with its collection. It was pointed out in the debate that there was a tendency, were the old system to continue, of 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 rehabilitation 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 foreshadowed in our article, "The Passing of Anglicanism," five years ago. In that article we pointed out that the developments in wireless, newspaper, and cinema educational publicity were making possible the supersession 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 doctrine of the primacy of the individual over the group—or rather over autocratic institutions affecting to represent the group. The religious conscience that the Money Monopoly wanted to cultivate was a conscience purged 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 foreshadowed 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 redeemed. But the Money Monopoly can always redeem what it wants to; hence the assignment is irrevocable. What is the implication of this? This, that whereas Anglican property is looked upon 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 follows: namely that 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 difference 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 else to borrow on or sell her securities. In either of the two latter alternatives she will have to retrench eventually, 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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