

nor so impossible as one might think. At bottom it consists in putting our acts and inspirations in accordance with the law of our being, and consequently with the Eternal Intention which willeth that we should be at all. Let a flower be a flower, a swallow a swallow, a rock a rock, and let a man be a man, and not a fox, a hare, a hog, or a bird of prey: this is the sum of the whole matter. — Pastor Charles Wagner.

#### LAND NATIONALIZATION.

A private letter from W. L. Price to Bolton Hall, published with their permission.

The nationalization of land is ethically all right if it be all nationalized; but this does not seem to me the best and simplest way of reaching the result desired.

It does not seem clear that because the community is entitled to the rental value of land it is entitled to own the land itself. There seems to me to be no reason why the people collectively, more than the individuals that compose it, should hold title to the land itself. It is the individual that we have to consider, not the man-created state.

If these municipalities that own enough land to pay all the taxes, do no more than that, the benefit is very slight comparatively speaking; for the rest of the land will be speculated in (at least to a very great extent), and the fact of there being no taxes will simply make the other land more desirable, and therefore increase rent, as of course you know.

But even if all land were held by the state, the system would be inferior to the Single Tax for this reason, although it would be precisely the same thing as a tax; and is, so far as it is already taken by the state. Where the titles are left in the hands of individuals there is a natural automatic method for the adjustment and readjustment of tax (rent) value. The land is always worth more to the new man than to the old, or he thinks it is, and this haggling of the market provides this constant readjustment of values which are at once shown by such transfers and subleases. If the state has the ownership, it is upon one of the two horns of this dilemma: either it must give possession to any piece of land upon a higher bid for it, which would destroy security of possession; or it must readjust this tax (rent) upon this offer, which would open the door to all sorts of corruption.

In any case it, the tax (rent), must be arbitrarily fixed by officials rather than by the people themselves; and this

seems to be fatal to the scheme, at least as compared with Single Tax, which seems to be ultimate and just as far as the land question goes, for this reason: if we are not all altruistic the single tax scheme would see that the man using the better lot should pay the higher tax; while if we should all become altruistic the man who had the better lot would insist that he pay the difference of advantage held, over to the crowd, even if there were no system or no state.

We should not, however, oppose a movement in the direction of land nationalization or in any other socialistic direction, for probably when men have righted some of the grosser wrongs of our present system they will be forced to turn to the Law. The Law will attend to that.

The Arts and Crafts movement is very largely in the direction of hand work, which is only brain work put to the test of practice, which is only soul work, building soul for the sake of other souls. Now the Socialist proposition seems on the face of it to be the very antithesis of this idea; but suppose their Mecca were reached, and we did all the work by pushing buttons? What then? As sure as there is a soul, or something that will do instead, in man, we would turn to the doing of something worth while as the best means by which that something should grow—the only way, for there is no other way of growth than through creative thought and work, and man's very necessities and weaknesses have compelled him to become the giant that he is, and "what he shall be coth not yet appear." So I am not fighting socialists; the disease will furnish its own antitoxin, and "he also serves who stands and kicks."

#### THE NEGRO'S CAPACITY FOR BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT.

Editorial in The Freeman, of Indianapolis, for December 3, 1904.

From the Augusta (Ga.) Chronicle we learn that the present owner of the "Jefferson Davis plantation," in Mississippi, is I. F. Montgomery, a colored man. He was a bright youth, and Joseph Davis, the brother of Jefferson Davis, owned him. Mr. Davis, attracted by the boy's sprightliness and good qualities, had him educated, and he was a famous pet on the plantation. He was always respectful, grateful and obedient as a bondman. He was faithful to the persons and interests of the Davis family during the war and after it. He was permitted to purchase the old plantation, and nobody objected. He has the esteem of all Missis-

sippians, and is now worth about \$300,000.

With this example before their eyes, the Mississippians ought to be able to admit that the Negro has ability to own and farm land on a large scale, as well as the white man. Also, that he may be such a good citizen as to enjoy general esteem. Now, really, would it not be safe to trust such a man with the right to vote?

Mr. Gideon B. Thompson, in his recent letters to the News, of this city, from Mississippi, mentioned the fact that some distance south of Vicksburg was a community inhabited exclusively by Negroes. They elect all the officers, collect and disburse all the taxes, and manage all the financial affairs of their town. There is no complaint of grafting, dishonesty or inefficiency, but those in charge exhibit full capacity for self-government.

Mr. Thompson mentions another case which establishes the same point. Thirty miles east of Vicksburg is the place where the celebrated battle of Champion Hill was fought, ending in the defeat of Pemberton by Grant. The battle took place on a plantation of 3,000 acres, owned by the widow Champion. After the war the place was much involved in debt, all the stock having been destroyed, the fences burned and other damage inflicted. Mrs. Champion tried to manage the place, but failed, and about 20 years ago turned all her business over to a Negro man. Since taking charge this manager has paid off \$60,000 indebtedness, restocked and improved the place, brought order out of chaos, and made his employer wealthy. Meantime he has acquired the ownership of much stock on his own account, and out of gratitude Mrs. Champion intends to give him 40 acres of land. He employs hundreds of men to work the plantation, looks after the sale of all the crops and superintends this large business with utmost integrity and ability. Gen. McGinnis, our postmaster, who commanded a brigade in the battle of Champion Hill, recently visited the scenes of his struggles, and was royally entertained by Mrs. Champion. From her he learned all about her Negro manager, and tells of him in an interview published in the News since his return to this city.

Now, does not this case fully refute the charge constantly made by Southerners that the Negro is "shiftless," has no capacity for business, and can only work under the direction of white men? Thousands of other instances might be mentioned of other Negroes in various Southern States who have accumulated property for themselves, and exhibited a high order of ability as farmers, merchants and all-round business men.