

## “SERMON ON LAND VALUES.”

By the Rev. Herbert S. Bigelow



REV. HERBERT S. BIGELOW

In his Yorkshire League notes for September, Mr Skirrow had a joyous reference to Mr Bigelow's Sermon on Land Values, delivered under the auspices of the League in the Temperance Hall, Keighley. The chair was occupied by Mr Ashley Mitchell, President of the League.

Those who were privileged to hear Mr Bigelow's address to the Edinburgh Conference on "The Religious Teaching of Henry George" can readily follow Mr Skirrow's comments on the Keighley meeting. He wrote:

"We have had many expressions of opinion on Mr Bigelow's sermon, and without exception they were of highly complimentary character. The meeting renewed the faith of members and friends and did much to encourage others to read Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*, the book that pointed the way of economic salvation and the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth."

We put on record again this pleasing tribute to our able and devoted orator Herbert S. Bigelow.

The following statement is taken from the report of the Keighley meeting appearing in the *Keighley Weekly News*, 24th August:—

On both sides of the ocean they were getting into the same trouble, and their problem was the same. The fact was that in almost all industries they could produce twice as much as they could sell, and somehow they had got to make more jobs for men, and the most serious economic riddle of the States, as well as in this country, was to furnish productive employment to the unemployed and those who were half unemployed. The one thing Governments had not tried was to untax industry by taking their support from ground rents. "The difficulties we are in," went on the speaker, "may compel us to re-examine the proposals of Henry George, for there is no escape from the logic of these proposals."

"Riding through your country," proceeded Mr Bigelow, "one finds everywhere great landed estates which are walled against the public, and which are practically tax free. Why do you not put taxes on these estates and break them up and throw them open to productive use? That would increase employment for labour."

Every tax was a penalty on production, except a tax on land value, which was a penalty on holding land out of use. "Stop taxing labour out of jobs, rather tax land into use," said Mr Bigelow. "Many of our troubles would automatically clear up if we were to make an intelligent use of the taxing power. A social or public value attached to all land and the private landlord collected that public value in the form of ground rent, and if the State took this ground rent or a good portion of it, it would not have to impose any taxes on commodities. Then they could sell in the world market the products of untaxed industries, and home customers could buy billions more of the products of their factories. If next April public opinion in Great Britain would compel the Government to bring in that

sort of a Budget, in a few years' time unemployment would disappear and the country would regain and enlarge its foreign trade." As a loyal American, Mr Bigelow said he wished they could beat this country in that policy. "If you beat us, you will hold your place as the industrial and commercial leader of the world," he concluded.

## A BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE

To a Churchman who puts Religion into his Politics

(From a special article in the "Wood Green Sentinel," 31st October.)

Our friend Fred Verinder has reached 71 years, a good many of them spent ardently for the realization here of Henry George's land taxation proposals, and he must feel hopeful of seeing some result of his efforts in the Labour Government's Budget next March. At the recent International Conference for Land Value Taxation, held at Edinburgh, Verinder, who is a Churchman, and has a religious basis for his politics, read a paper that excited great interest among the delegates of many countries. It was based on the petition for our "daily bread" in The Lord's Prayer. In the course of it he said:

"God has provided a great storehouse, inexhaustibly stocked with the provisions we stand in need of. Why, then, is any one of us still in want of daily bread? How is it that over a million of registered unemployed are unable to draw the necessaries of life from God's richly-filled cupboard and so to 'eat their own bread,' earned by their own labour? It is only because some of God's children have seized the key of the Father's cupboard and have locked the door against the rest of us.

"Give us"—all of us—"our daily bread" means in terms of politico-economics, 'Give us'—all of us—"liberty of access to the land which," as the Old Testament so often tells us, 'the Lord our God hath given us.'

"We can surely claim the authority of Holy Scripture for the coupling of 'Land and Liberty' in the title of the International organ of our great movement to ensure that every man who is willing to work shall have access to the Father's storehouse for his daily bread. The end we aim at is surely in accordance with the Law which Christ came to fulfil. But what about the means to that end?

"We are, unlike the Hebrews of old, a highly industrialized people. Land in our country, in nearly every country, varies extraordinarily, from nothing at all to millions of pounds per acre. Our needs for direct access to land vary very greatly also. To solve the modern land question by an equal division of land is unthinkable. How can we reconcile our modern conditions with the doctrine of equal rights in land? We can do it, *mutatis mutandis*, pretty much as the Hebrew Torah attempted to do it. An equal distribution of the land was adjusted by a method of taxation which is precisely the root-principle of the reform which we call the Taxation of Land Values."

Our birthday tribute to Verinder is this attempt to forward the cause he has so much at heart, and we are sure it will be more acceptable to him than presents and personal good wishes. Still, "many happy returns," and may Snowden's Budget satisfy him!

The Labour Question. An Abridgment of "The Condition of Labour," by HENRY GEORGE. Harry Llewelyn Davies Memorial Edition. 3d.