

LAND & LIBERTY

(Incorporating "LAND VALUES.")

Published by THE UNITED COMMITTEE FOR THE
TAXATION OF LAND VALUES.

Twenty-eighth Year. Established June, 1894.

3d. Monthly. By Post 4s. per annum.

United States and Canada, 1 Dollar.

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THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT

"Near nineteen hundred years ago, when another civilization was developing monstrous inequalities, when the masses everywhere were being ground into hopeless slavery, there arose in a Jewish village an unlearned carpenter, who, scorning the orthodoxies and ritualisms of the time, preached to labourers and fishermen the gospel of the fatherhood of God, of the equality and brotherhood of men, who taught his disciples to pray for the coming of the kingdom of heaven on earth. The college professors sneered at him, the orthodox preachers denounced him. He was reviled as a dreamer, as a disturber, as a 'communist,' and, finally, organized society took the alarm, and he was crucified between two thieves. But the word went forth, and, spread by fugitives and slaves, made its way against power and against persecution till it revolutionized the world, and out of the rotting old civilization brought the germ of the new. Then the privileged classes rallied again, carved the effigy of the man of the people in the courts and on the tombs of kings, in his name consecrated inequality, and wrested his gospel to the defence of social injustice. But again the same great ideas of a common fatherhood, of a common brotherhood, of a social state in which none shall be overworked and none shall want, begin to quicken in common thought. When a mighty wind meets a strong current, it does not portend a smooth sea. And whoever will think of the opposing tendencies beginning to develop will appreciate the gravity of the social problems the civilized world must soon meet. He will also understand the meaning of Christ's words when he said: '*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword.*'"—Henry George, in *SOCIAL PROBLEMS*, Chap. IV.

We cordially send our readers the best of good wishes for the New Year. May it witness a great advance in every human movement designed and promoted to better the condition of the people, and may those who stand for economic freedom not falter by the way. This New Year message is specially prompted by a greeting from a valued correspondent, a devoted advocate of Henry George's teaching, and a warm supporter of *LAND & LIBERTY* as the standard bearer of our faith. Our friend suggests that this part of the paper, this month, might deal with the spiritual side of our cause.

It is a task to put into words what the followers of Henry George feel can be said, or ought to be said, on this deeper aspect of their belief.

The events of the day continue to provoke discussion as to what is wrong with society, what must be done, and what must not be done, so that we may cross over to the promised land of peace and plenty. Nor is this a sordid idea, for it is written, as it is understood to a degree, that the moral and intellectual faculties of man rest upon his animal nature. Why is it that so many

deliberately ignore the struggle for food, clothing and shelter? They appear to assume that this is no problem and that the people who perish by the way can if they choose reach out to higher things, to the things of the spirit. In other words they assume a freedom to advance which the people do not possess. "We have piped and ye have not danced." Henry George says somewhere that it is sad reading the lives of men who would have done something for their fellows. Again and again in history we witness the failure of the common people "who have nothing to lose but their chains," unable or unwilling to respond to some great moral uplift, and just as surely do we find the would-be leaders unable or unwilling to understand the economic needs and forces that hold the people in check. The lesson is that openings to intellectual and social progress are only so in name, so long as economic justice is denied.

Once again we seem to have reached a testing time. It is a commonplace that a new awakening is at hand, but the voices jangle out of tune and the poetry is far from the kind that speaks of the joy of life and the coming of the Kingdom of Righteousness. The renaissance is menaced and delayed by forces that have yet to be weighed and measured.

But what is to be the outcome of this great questioning, and what have we Single Taxers (this term for want of a better one) to say about our place in the great debate? Let everyone answer for himself. After all has been said that can be said on private property in land as the standing obstacle to progress, what we are out for is the moral and spiritual regeneration of the race. We have never sought to hide this light of our gospel, nor to minimize its influence on our propaganda. But we do hold that those who by themselves, or by direction, dig and delve in the wide field of economic phenomena are just as much inspired by their higher nature as those who would speak with so much acceptance for an hour, for a night or for a life-time on the abstract spiritual call to action.

It is in the very nature of our question that the spiritual appeal sends almost everyone it touches in search of the physical basis of the argument. The intuition of the newcomer, as a rule, is that he has caught a glimpse of a great truth, namely, that God's free gifts are for all, and that these are embraced in the economic term "land." In his new-born zeal he sets out to explain—and comes quickly enough into conflict with the man who wants to know how he would fare under the new dispensation. What would happen to the widow and orphans with investments in some patch of ground, or in a building society? Would they be compensated for the loss of their income? What about the land that would pay no one to cultivate? Is it not true in many instances that the burdens on agricultural land are already almost beyond endurance? and so forth, and so on.

Our new convert must come to earth, he must meet and cope with the "practical man's" objections; he must say how his scheme would work out in practice. To do this he must know something of the rise and growth of land monopoly and he must at least have a speaking acquaintance with the existing methods of national and municipal finance. He must have this equipment and more if he would

spread the light; and so he is straightway driven to the quarries where the questions are hammered out, where the hard cold facts and the dry-as-dust figures that go to prove his case are to be found. He must step down from the mountain peaks of rhetoric and come to the solid earth for the knowledge he must possess if he would take his place as guide, teacher or evangelist. And when he takes off his coat to answer the questions those who are at the Research departments and the Information bureaux of the movement must be at his service ready to supply him with the data, and sometimes with advice, as to how it can best be related to the matter under review.

When Henry George first realized the misery and the squalor of a great city he tells us how it would not let him rest, for thinking of what caused it and how it could be cured, and in his *PROGRESS AND POVERTY* we have the fruits of his resolution to find out the meaning of it all. The first half of the book is given over entirely to economic analysis. In this examination he unearthed the natural laws that govern the production and distribution of wealth and there he found the explanation and the proof of "the Divine Will, expressed in the immutable laws of the physical and moral universe which reward obedience and punish disobedience." And in the light of this discovery he urged getting down to the bed rock of "our bad social adjustments." We have had in the past, as we now have, moral and spiritual teachers of high standing in all walks of life, but their spiritual abodes were built on the sand and went down before the storm whenever it came with strength and purpose. Henry George first elucidated what was wrong with our social edifice. In this connection he was for first things first. He examined at length the work of the architects and builders, showed where they went wrong, and in his correlation of the natural laws that govern the production and the distribution of wealth—the law of rent and the law of wages—he solved the problem. And this problem solved, he made the great spiritual appeal with all the assurance of an inspired prophet and seer.

As we write, another correspondent equally entitled to be heard, sends word that of all the work we do he attaches most importance to our Political Economy Classes. We find ourselves in agreement with both views—the spiritual appeal and the economic investigation. The justice and the expediency of our reform go forward hand in hand. The practical policy is in operation in many places and out of this success has come a convincing and illuminating literature. This new strength, be it noted, comes not from any partisan school of reform, but from recognized official quarters, from municipalities and departments of State concerned with valuation and the collection of the public revenue. It is a great support and encouragement to our speakers and writers, and the spiritual appeal is over it all. This we know by the moral enthusiasm revealed in our correspondence. We commence by the conviction that land values ought to be taken for public purpose, and it is something to know that there are countries where *the ought to be* has been translated into *has been done*, and with so much public approval and support.

We declaim against monopoly as we expose its crimes, but we know that monopoly, however firmly

entrenched, could not stand against an enlightened community. What we are up against is ignorance, contempt and neglect of human rights. Monopoly and all its evil brood will go down only before a people who realize its injustice and who are "animated with the religious sentiment and warm with sympathy for human suffering." If we desire to reach out to the things of the spirit, if we would love our neighbour as ourselves, it must be in and through social justice. We must seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, if love and peace and goodwill and all other blessings are to be added unto us.

But the conception of social justice is strangely at a discount with those who profess to lead and direct public opinion. One calls for international organization as the prelude to the brotherhood of man; another pleads for peace by way of the League of Nations, or any other way. Let us concentrate on education, say some. (The voice says what kind?) And the complaint is that all through the progress of our educational system things have only gone from bad to worse. The business men look for markets, idle men ask for work to keep body and soul together, and their advisers tell both supplicants in effect and in so many words that they will be all right when they get what they want. A member of the Government, along with other authorities, has given it as his opinion that the cure for unemployment is work! Counsel is darkened by words without wisdom, and above the din the idea widely prevails that the various and varied abstract views and opinions are in reality schemes for social salvation, which with the will to power, can be adopted. It is amazing but it is true nevertheless that the advocates of so many political and social changes assume a freedom of action that has still to be won.

Mr. Robert Smillie, speaking at Glasgow the other day, under the auspices of the "Study Circle" of the City, on the need for peace said that with international peace our social problems would be easily solved. Perhaps, but how are we to get peace except through the solution of social problems? What is the good of seeking for peace over the heads of people who are at war with each other for a foothold on God's earth to earn a living wage? How can peace ever come to this age of complex commerce and material advance when the mass of the people are held down to the lower levels of a sordid struggle to make ends meet? Verily, it is not peace that will solve social problems; it is the solution of social problems that will bring the peace. Nor can the brotherhood of man be brought about by world union. No organization of men, however it be named, can hope to function for the common weal while economic injustice remains to keep men apart, and strangers to each other. It is the brotherhood of man that will make all things possible, and the question is how to shape our ends to this great achievement.

There is more in the land question than most people imagine, or care to admit, and for this obtuseness the Single Taxers have the remedy in their publicity campaign. We see and profess to see in the solution of the land question the freedom to solve social problems. That is all, just a measure of freedom necessary for the people to fashion their own

lives and work out their own salvation ; but it is just this that so many reformers miss seeing. It never seems to strike them that if the people were given the chance to be up and doing they could manage for themselves. This is the kind of education that would help, the education that would persuade, if not compel, the philanthropist to take the beam out of his own eye and realize that his brother if left to himself, with his due share of the vineyard would not prove the helpless creature he is found to be under the existing régime.

The Taxation of Land Values is but the name of a policy that when applied will unlock the door of the people's inheritance in the land. It defines an instrument for this purpose that has already been put to the test and with results that every politically wise person can find in the chronicles. It is a reform that is well calculated to break into the bottom monopoly that strangles industry and causes unemployment. That is its political meaning. There are business men who shy at politics and political adventure, but in this case there is nothing else for it. The reform must go through some legislative measure, hence its place in politics. If our common experience teaches us anything it is the folly of leaving politics to the politicians ; and if our captains of industry would understand the root causes of business depression they can get all the information they require in Adam Smith's *WEALTH OF NATIONS* and Henry George's *PROGRESS AND POVERTY*.

In its economic incidence the reform we advocate will set free the springs and wells of trade which God has so abundantly showered upon the people, free from the never-ending tribute of landlordism, and thereby make possible a society where everyone who wants to do the right thing shall not be kept back or hindered by want and the fear of want. It is in this direction, in the direction of economic freedom, we must travel if we would seek after the things of the spirit. If we would better the common lot, if we would see mankind endowed with faith, hope and charity, if we would learn to love one another, we must seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. If the brotherhood of man is ever to emerge from this world of chaos, it must come through a recognition of the law that God is no respecter of persons. Man is a land animal, and if the things of the spirit are to count, God's material gifts to him must be liberated from what Tolstoi has well named the Great Iniquity.

J. P.

The FAIRHOPE COURIER of 18th November reports a very good attendance at the disarmament rally at Comings Hall (Fairhope, Alabama) on the evening of Armistice Day. A number of resolutions were unanimously adopted, including the following :—

Resolved, that we recognize the root cause of war, as well as of inharmony and inequality at home, to be the desire of men for selfish dominion over their fellow-men, and that we assert as the only sufficient and enduring foundation of peace the application of the Law of Equal Freedom, applied through a complete and full democracy, the guarantee to all living and to every child yet unborn of equal right with all his fellows to enjoyment of all natural resources and the completest control by all nations of their own national affairs,

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE

A Call to the Labour Party

(From a letter addressed by Mr. L. L. Jones, Hon. Secretary of the Birkenhead Branch of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, to the Secretary of the Birkenhead Trades and Labour Council.)

DEAR SIR,

I am enclosing herewith the collecting book as requested, and very much regret having overlooked it until now. I profoundly regret also that I have found it absolutely impossible to assist financially or ask others to assist the Labour Party.

This impossibility is not a physical one ; it is a mental one, and will continue to be so until the Labour Party gets down to the social and moral code taught by the Carpenter of Nazareth to the fishermen of Galilee. Since I refer to the moral law it may be said that we differ in faith. Let me state my faith and we can then see what that difference is.

I believe in the Fatherhood of God and therefore in the Brotherhood of man. By man I mean all men, men of any nationality, creed or colour.

Do you agree ?

I believe that the Creator freely gave the earth to all of His children and that all have equal rights to its use.

Do you agree ?

I believe that the injunction "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread" necessarily implies "Thou shalt not eat bread in the sweat of thy brother's brow."

Do you agree ?

I believe that all are violating the Divine law who live in idleness on wealth produced by others, since they eat bread in the sweat of their brother's brow.

Do you agree ?

I believe that no man should have power to take wealth he has not produced or earned unless freely given to him by the producer.

Do you agree ?

I believe that brotherhood requires giving an equivalent for every service received from a brother.

Do you agree ?

I believe it is blasphemous to assert or insinuate that God has condemned some of His children to hopeless poverty and to the crimes, want and misery resulting therefrom, and has at the same time awarded to others lives of ease and luxury without labour.

Do you agree ?

I believe that involuntary poverty and involuntary idleness are unnatural, and are due to the denial by some of the right of OTHERS to use freely the gifts of God to all.

Do you agree ?

Since labour products are needed to sustain life and since labour must be applied to land in order to produce, I believe every child comes into life with Divine permission to use land without the consent of any other child of God.

Do you agree ?

Where men congregate in organized society land has a value apart from the value of things produced by labour ; as population and industry increase the value of land increases, but the value of labour products does not. That increase in land value is community-made value. Inasmuch as your power to labour is a gift of God, all the wealth produced by your labour is yours, and no man nor collection of men have a right to take any of it from you.

Do you agree ?

I believe that the community-made values of land belong to the community, just as the wealth produced by your labour is yours. Therefore I believe that the fundamental evil, the great God-denying crime in society, is the monstrous system under which SOME MEN are permitted to put into their pockets, appropriate in fact, the community-made values of land, while organized