

stipulation for securing to the tenant the deduction from his rent of the amount due in respect of the rating of the land. We agree with Councillor Kirtley, of Sunderland, that the Bill will be "a stepping stone to a great national reform." It is in these matters of household reform that the true function of Liberalism consists. We have wandered over the face of the earth in search of adventure long enough."

The movement is rapidly forcing its way into politics. In a recent answer to an inquiring of the London Daily News requesting an expression of opinion on the situation, Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman thus replied:

"Is it not the fact that the land system as it operates in our great towns and centres is a heavier drain upon industry and the well-being of the people than any consequences that can follow from the operation of foreign tariffs? Sir R. Giffen has told us that in the last twenty years house rent has doubled. I should prefer to see steps taken to relieve the homes of the people of this excessive pressure instead of adding to it by taxing food and manufactures."

INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTION.

(For the Review.)

BY EDWARD T. WEEKS.

Availing myself of your permission to discuss still further the question of independent political action for Single Taxers, it is scarcely necessary to do more than reiterate the argument already advanced, that it is our duty to be guided by principle rather than by seeming expediency. And that therefore in every community in which we are sufficiently strong to maintain even a very small Single Tax party, it is our duty to organize and maintain such a party. For in those communities, at least, Single Taxers are free to vote for what is right. And for them to assert that every political wrong involves a moral wrong, and yet vote with parties pledged to what we condemn, certainly renders them guilty of the wrong; they are, to this extent, at least, responsible for the poverty, suffering and vice which these wrongs produce, to say nothing of the inconsistency involved, nor of the betrayal of right principle.

To assert that voting for the old parties and their fallacies is the quickest way to get the Single Tax is to assert what cannot be proven. Besides, it is merely to prefer seeming expediency to principle; is to follow error rather than truth. It is simply the old argument that the end justifies the means. It is a mere excuse offered in palliation of our short-comings. And more than this, it is a cowardly plea: one that confesses ourselves afraid to proclaim the naked truth, but prefers to ease conscience by seeking to discover some approach to right

principle among the quantities of known errors for which the parties stand. Our whole duty is to act honestly, and to vote for what is right. This done, it is not our duty to worry about results. These rest with a higher power. This fact cannot be too strongly emphasized for it seems to have been forgotten. It is not our duty to succeed, but only to so act that we should deserve success.

We have followed seeming expediency in our methods for many years and we can now see some of the results. We have shouted and voted for tariff reform, free silver, local option in taxation, three cent fares and for all sorts of things, except what we believe in, until we find that the Single Taxers are now habitually evading any direct enunciation of Single Tax principles as though these were monstrous; and actually doing their best to inculcate doctrines which are either absolutely wrong or which confuse the people and lead them to seek for remedies elsewhere than in the Single Tax. This may seem to be a strange assertion. Yet in proof of it, let us frankly, but without wishing to wound, consider the attitudes of the leading exponents of the movement, and of those whom they influence. Thus, we find Mr. Fillebrown threatening to sever connection with the Massachusetts Single Taxers unless they resolve that they are not opposing the private ownership of land. And this though they know that whoever rightfully owns the land rightfully owns the rents it produces; and that if this rightful owner be a private person, then for the State to take these rents, in taxation, is robbery. Again, Mr. Johnson and nearly all other Single Taxers are advocating home rule in taxation, which asserts that every county or city should be permitted to impose such taxes as it pleases, while, in truth, it is the duty of the State to secure the citizen in the equal enjoyment of his rights, his labor and the fruits thereof, both as against individuals and communities. In California, Mr. James G. Maguire runs for Governor and is allowed to discuss every issue whatsoever excepting only the Single Tax. So Mr. Post runs almost the entire gamut of the so-called reforms, yet leads the majority of the Single Taxers of Chicago in bitterly opposing the efforts of a handful of men to bring the Single Tax to the attention of the voters of that city. Mr. N. O. Nelson thinks any attempt to get the Single Tax is ill-considered, because the American people love their homes too much to adopt such a system! Mr. Garrison is much more convinced of the necessity of bringing about an unnatural social intermingling among the races than of the need for securing primary justice to all men. Thus, our best men, those who have sacrificed most for the cause; those whom we most highly esteem, those as to whose intentions there can be no question, have gone off on side issues; and

we find the very apostles of the Single Tax, (and with them the vast majority of Single Taxers), after twenty years of practicing this doctrine of expediency, have either lost sight of the fact that land monopoly is the great source of economic evils and are now helping to divert attention from the Single Tax movement by magnifying the importance of lesser evils; or are actually expending energy, time and money to teach doctrines which are in direct conflict with our principles. There is little wonder therefore that our own cause is suffering at the hands of its friends.

Possibly the most conspicuous example of this desertion of principle for expediency is found in the movement for home rule in taxation. Its basic idea is that the voters of every community should be empowered to decide for themselves just what taxes they shall impose upon the minority. Clearly such a teaching is incorrect. The state owes to its citizens the duty of securing to all, alike, the exercise of their equal freedom; without interference therein either from individuals or from the community. This is the principle purpose of its existence. Hence, it must see that they are neither robbed nor enslaved. And any state whose constitution permits localities to rob their citizens falls short of the duty it owes them. The moral law is as binding on the State as on the individual. And since the taxation of the products of labor is theft, to permit it to the community is for the State to violate the command, "Thou shall not steal." Our fight, therefore, is for a clear recognition of this command in the fundamental law of the State; and is against any enactment which gives consent to each community to plunder at its will. We might as justly urge the correctness of local option in theft, or in slavery, or in murder. For the wrong which we are fighting leads to all of these. Home rule in matters of mere local administration is altogether right. But home rule which permits violation of the fundamental rights of citizenship, of property, and of life is altogether wrong.

Yet such is the doctrine which this pursuit of expediency has led the great bulk of Single Taxers to adopt. For this, great campaigns have been fought, precious money expended and energy wasted! Would it not have been better for us had those campaigns been made straight out fights for the truth? Then, defeat would have left us stronger, while to-day, from having supported errors, we are more utterly weakened than at any time in the last ten years.

In the same way, the issue of three cent fares is not our doctrine, since we believe in government ownership. And so of tariff reduction, since we favor free trade. Yet all these years we have been shouting for these errors. Is it never to be time for us to speak out for the naked truth! To vote for right principles!

Consider for a moment. What right have

we, knowing the truth, to refuse to put it before the people on the ground that it is more expedient to join them in voting for what we believe to be wrong? Think of the great responsibility and the risk of error which we thus assume. For it is clear that if we organize, work and vote for a straight Single Tax party, we shall have done our full duty. But, if it be morally wrong for us to vote for existing parties we have failed in our duty and do not deserve success, nor will it come to us.

Why is it that we take up and vote for all these strange teachings rather than for the right? Is it not, after all, that we are afraid of the effect on the people of our voting for the naked truth? Afraid that they will see how few we are and will laugh at us? Or else mistrust that the people can know the truth when presented to them? And is it not because of these fears of the power of truth, and these mistrusts of the people that we take up all these follies and teach them? If so, the prompting is cowardly, the act is a betrayal of principle, and the result, as we see, has been disastrous. And it is only natural that it should be. For it is incredible that the expounding of error can best inculcate the truth, or that voting for wrongs is the quickest way to secure rights.

Our duty, therefore, is to organize a straight out Single Tax party in all of the States where we can do so, and to thus give to every voter the opportunity of voting right. So soon as we have done this our responsibility will end, and his commence. But so long as we do not do this, and knowingly urge him to vote for wrongs, the responsibility is not upon him, but rests heavily upon us. For we have deliberately failed to do our duty by our fellow men.

As to whether we shall adopt right methods now depends upon the Single Taxers of the large centers, such as New York, Chicago and Boston, where the movement is sufficiently strong to have (by petition) the nominees of a party printed on the official ballots. Those not so located can but present the truth to them with the hope that some among them will take up this work.

In the December number of *The New Christianity*, the editor, Rev. S. H. Spencer, brings to a close his searching paper on Socialism, which has run through twelve numbers. The final paper treats of those *practical* restrictions on liberty made necessary under Socialistic *regime*, and these are contrasted with what the author terms the "*self regulating*" method of distinction which would obtain under the Single Tax. So admirably condensed, and so unusually fair and even sympathetic is the author's marshalling of these objections against Socialism that we would like to see the twelve papers published in pamphlet form for general distribution.