

Almost everybody scolds about trusts and monopolies, coal barons, oil magnates and railroad kings, but they seldom think of the perfectly natural resort of taxing them to the same extent that other people are being taxed.

Taxation appears to be the missing ingredient in a flood of nostrums, and yet it is respectfully submitted that taxation is the only possible method of regulation and correction, because it is the only method that can be made self-operative and impartial. If the year 1903 will put upon Boston's black-board an illustration in this lesson of the taxation of special privilege it will be the Columbus of a New World.



## SINGLE TAXERS—INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTION—OUR DUTY

GET A NEW ANGLE ON THE SITUATION BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.

All Single Taxers realize that the poverty, suffering and crime which afflict society result chiefly from wrongs which men have enacted into law, and that these resulting evils can only be remedied by such changes in our laws and social institutions as will cause them to conform to right and justice. We also realize that these changes can be brought about, solely through the ballot, and that to be active Single Taxers, we should be active in politics. Since, therefore, we owe it to ourselves and our country to work diligently in politics, one would certainly expect to find the same unity among Single Taxers as to their political course, that we find to exist as to our principles. But, on the contrary, we are hopelessly divided among all the existing political parties, and in the same locality, single taxers are often found working hard for rival principles and candidates. This ought not to be; and the reason that it is so is this: We are united upon the principles we believe in, simply because we have realized that back of every political question there is a moral question; and we have brought our political beliefs to the test of morals, and have rejected as unsound every principle which does not conform to correct morals. But we have never realized that the same test should just as truly be applied in deciding where our political support should be given. As to this, we have confessedly followed seeming expediency, and each man has voted and worked as seemed to him most expedient.

Herein lies our error, and the cause of our lack of unity, organization and force. We are placing expediency above morality. We are supporting and voting for the old parties and all the wrongs which they advocate, simply because it seems, to a short sighted view, *expedient* that we should desert our own principles and "follow the line of least resistance."

To see how clearly wrong in morals this is, let us briefly review the teachings of the existing parties.

### TWO OF A KIND.

These organizations agree in upholding the private ownership of land; in the taxing of labor and the products of labor; in advocating a tariff, differing merely as to the purpose of the tax. They disagree as to the method of regulating trusts; as to the kind of money we should use; and as to the policy of expansion. These teachings advocated by them are all violative of natural law and justice. We know that private ownership of land is the

source of industrial slavery, and that taxation of the products of labor is morally equivalent to robbery; and that in favoring these institutions, these political parties are bringing poverty and distress to millions of people. We know that trusts, imperialism, expansion, government by injunction and the like, are but logical results of the private ownership of land and of the spirit it engenders. That they are the mere symptoms, and that it is senseless to fight them while approving our present land laws as all existing parties do.

Now, knowing all these policies to be utterly wrong and absolutely opposed to our principles, and realizing that back of every political question lies a moral question, it is clear that we cannot rightfully and conscientiously vote for parties seeking to enact them into law.

#### PARTICEPS CRIMINIS.

When we know that our neighbor is striving to do some act that will cause great injury to another, if we aid him so to do, we are ourselves guilty of the wrong. And when we, knowing that existing political parties are seeking to pass measures which will deprive our fellowmen of their natural heritage and debase them from free men into practical serfdom, still countenance, work and vote for their success, we are morally guilty of wrong-doing. Conceding that the principles of one party are a shade less objectionable than are those of the other, yet, even then, its principles are utterly bad.

True, some single taxers assert that the Bryan wing of the Democratic party is coming our way. But, in fact, it is as much wedded to land monopoly as is Republicanism. And, when favoring this, it undertakes a crusade against trusts, imperialism and other evils which land monopoly breeds, it is doing a vain and silly thing.

#### RESPECT WE PAID TO AUTHORITY.

Let us be frank, though, I trust, not unkind. The greater portion of single taxers have repeatedly followed the fatuous hope that the Democratic party was coming our way. In 1892, we abandoned our principles to vote for "Democratic Free Trade," and the consequence was, that real free trade received a blow from which it has not yet recovered. Is not some part of the blame for this to rest upon our shoulders for deserting real principle, to follow seeming expediency? Again, in 1896, the Democracy abandoned the tariff issue entirely and declared for Free Silver. Yet we persuaded ourselves that it was coming toward us and we worked for it (and for Senator Jones, of the Round Bale Cotton Trust), only to learn after long waiting, that its nominee had evolved and was advocating a licensing of large corporations, thus seeking to regulate trusts by a new tax on industry. Still our infatuation remained, and we cheerfully came to the support of the Democracy again in 1900, only to have Mr. Bryan, (according to the reports of his speeches in the Democratic press,) visit Delaware, and deal us a heavy blow in return for our support, by declaring that an income tax is more equitable than is a tax on land values. Does this show that the Democratic party is coming our way? Surely not.

#### STICK TO THEM, AND REMAIN IN THE DISCARD.

Nothing in this article is intended as a criticism of any faction, or party. We may hope and concede that they are all honest and sincere in their beliefs. Nevertheless, they are wrong. They are teaching unsound doctrines and are leading the people away from the truth. In aiding them, we are merely making our own task more difficult. Sooner or later we must un-

teach what we are helping to inculcate. For the very errors that these parties are now teaching, the rightfulness of private ownership of land; the justice of raising revenue by tariffs, and by taxes on industry; restriction as the cure for trusts; regulation of railroads; the correctness of existing patent laws, and the like, are the very teachings which we ought to fight without compromise. They are the very antithesis of right, and sound principle, and compel us to oppose the present parties which uphold them.

But we are told that voting for the old parties is the quickest way to get the single tax. Past experience does not warrant us in accepting this assumption as correct. But aside from experience, what is this policy of voting, to plunder the poor by taxes, while depriving them of the opportunity to work, save the old idea of doing wrong that good may come? This is unthinkable. We seek to bring about a reign of justice; it will never come through wrong-doing nor from worshipping at the shrine of Baal. It is the high moral spirit of the single tax that constitutes its vital power and draws men to it. We can only hope to succeed by an appeal to the conscience of the nation. Surely we must not mar the loveliness of our teaching, and disfigure its beauty by engraving upon it the doctrine that men may do evil if it seems to them expedient.

#### O YE, OF LITTLE FAITH.

No conflict can exist between expediency and sound morals. What is not right cannot be expedient; and the only infallible method of judging of the expediency of any act is to bring it to the test of morals.

By this test, therefore, single taxers must try our present political methods. Let us now bring these methods to this test. Let us consider what is our moral responsibility in the premises. We, then, know that all existing parties, (by which I mean national parties), favor taxing the products of labor and upholding private ownership in land. We know that the taking by society of a part of the products of labor in taxation is just as truly robbery as is the plundering of a coach by a lone highwayman. That when it deprives men of their equal rights to the use of the earth, it just as surely entails famine, pestilence, and death, as would some horde of hideous monsters carrying the torch and sword through the land. We know that these evils are the necessary, the unavoidable results, of the policy which all existing parties unite in upholding. Now, if, as is clear, all who knowingly and willfully aid and assist in perpetrating a wrong are, in morals, responsible for the necessary consequences of the act, we, knowing full well that the continuance of these laws must bring hunger and want, sin and shame, depravity and death, to tens of thousands, cannot vote for parties advocating them without doing grievous wrong, without incurring mortal guilt. We are free to vote for what is right and we cannot *rightfully* vote for what will reduce our men to want, and cause their children to famish before their eyes.

If, as is therefore plain, it is our imperative duty to refuse to vote for platforms that are productive of such wrongs, let us consider how we should best proceed to get the platform and the party for which we can rightfully vote. Some of us have had sufficient political experience to fully appreciate the importance of good tactical position, and are perfectly willing to seek it when so doing does not conflict with correct principle. Most of our friends are acting with the Democratic party, and a number still believe in the idea that it is coming our way. Let us concede for the argument, that it might not be tactful to break with the Democratic party just now. It is not proposed that a national organization be effected at this time.

BE AS WISE AS THE SERPENT, BUT DON'T OVER-WORK IT.

What we suggest is that the existing local parties favoring Single Tax, in New York, (Liberal Democratic,) Illinois, Delaware, and Colorado, and like organizations which can easily be formed in a number of other states, should, upon the calling of the National Convention of the party, elect delegates to it from their respective states, and boldly claiming for themselves and their platforms to represent the real Democracy, ask admittance for their delegation to the National convention. A demand for recognition coming from organized Democratic bodies in a dozen or more states—some of them doubtful—would necessarily have great weight. And while the delegations would be refused admission, their principles might be recognized, even if the Bryan and Cleveland wings remained in harmony.

But, the chances for harmony are very slight. Each of the factions sincerely believe that the policies of the other are incorrect, and to their antagonism on principle is now being added personal bitterness among the leaders. The struggle for delegates will be most acrimonious, and will prepare the rank and file of the respective factions to welcome a separation. And the leaders are men who know no compromise.

Now, if the party split over free silver, or any such issue, and we remain unorganized, it is most assuredly immaterial to us and to real Democracy what faction or party we flock with. And, as in the past, we will again be found hopelessly divided, and all earnestly supporting measures which we *know* will breed suffering among the people. But if we organize, we may reasonably hope to succeed in shaping the policy of the radical wing of the party. We need only elect our own delegations, and upon their being refused seats in the convention, have them organize their own "Liberal Democratic" convention, and then, when the split occurs, have them coalesce with the radical wing if this will incorporate into its platform, in clear cut terms, a declaration in favor of the Single Tax. If those at its head are really radical along anything like correct lines, they will do so. We will offer them for this, not only voters, but a candidate of exceptional strength and the nucleus of an organization in many states where they will otherwise be absolutely without leaders. We will further assure them of the support of a large number of men who will put out their shekels for the success of the cause. Will not these be real and substantial advantages to offer them in return for a plank in their platform?

#### BLIND LEADERS OF THE BLIND.

But suppose they prove utterly blind in their errors and wrapped in their belief that they can kill monopoly by fighting its mere symptoms; and suppose that while beating tom-toms about the Philippine question, imperialism, trusts, tariff reform, and the like, they should refuse to join with us in attacking the root of the evil and declaring against land monopoly. Ought we not then to leave them, as well as the Cleveland wing, to their vain imaginings and form a third wing of the party to make the fight against both sets of errors? Or are we again to permit our people to divide among themselves as to what form of error they will advocate? Most assuredly, we should make our nominations and go before the people.

#### THE BEAUTIFUL UNIT RULE.

Again, if we fail to elect delegates independently, as is here suggested, or to take some similar action, who can effectively demand of the convention that it incorporate the single tax into its platform? Of course, a few sin-



gle taxers may be chosen as delegates. But they will be committed to one or the other faction; and, besides, their voices will be stifled under the unit rule, by which nearly every state delegation is tied up. The vote of the majority of each delegation will control; and probably not a majority of a single delegation will urge the Single Tax as part of the platform. Each wing of the party will, therefore, take up some of the present fallacies because they believe there is a demand for them, leaving us to choose between them. But if we elect our own delegations and have an organized convention of delegates ready to put out a separate ticket if our demands are not complied with, we may very probably get what we ask for.

Now, let us suppose that we make no such move and either because the Cleveland wing controls without a split, or because the Bryanites take up some new and popular error, or for any other reason, our plank is rejected and we find ourselves compelled to put out a ticket. We can in no sense, then claim to be Democrats, since we will be nominating candidates, not as the real radical wing, but in opposition to the party ticket. We will thus lose the tactical advantage which, we are told, will come from claiming to be the third, and truly Democratic wing. Again we will then have before us the entire work of organizing our national, state, and local committees, and getting into shape for the fight, and of making it; all in the brief time between the holding of the Democratic convention and the day of election. It is easy to appreciate the utter impracticability of doing this effectively in that space of time. And our vote will be distressingly small.

#### IN NUT-SHELL.

To put the matter briefly, if this plan is adopted and either wing accepts our plank, our idea is to simply fall into line with their Democracy. Our organizations will then make their fight. But if they refuse to give us either a platform or a nominee satisfactory to us, then we will be ready to make out own fight.

#### SAVE US FROM OUR FRIENDS.

It may be said that if the Democratic party will take up tariff reform, we should stay with it. This same party under these same leaders betrayed this issue once before, and did free trade more harm than did the attacks of its open enemies. But even if they are sincere, we know that every improvement in government, like every new invention, simply increases the value of land, and under our present land system, adds to the proportion received by the land owners, and decreases the proportion of the laborers. This is true of government ownership of transportation lines, of a better medium of exchange, and of tariff for revenue only. Thus, as regards the latter, while a lower tariff would lessen the cost of living, it would lower wages as well; for there being more laborers than there are opportunities open to labor, (land being held under private ownership) the competition for work must force wages down proportionately. This demonstrates the wrongfulness of our deserting the single tax, for a moment, for any other reform. With land under private ownership, the financial disturbances which result from the doubt and fear of change, practically offsets and almost nullifies even the little temporary benefit which labor should receive; and thus all these movements, even when successful, must bring disappointment and discouragement. Let us not suffer ourselves to be drawn aside to battle with these issues, since the same amount of effort required to overcome them would overthrow land monopoly. Once this was accomplished and its benefits realized, the rest would be easy. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness (justice) and all these things shall be added unto ye."

HARK! SEMPRONIUS.

We fully appreciate the difficulty of uniting Single Taxers in this movement, but we have always been divided politically and if we are ever to unite it must be in support of the truth, not of error. And surely a larger proportion of Single Taxers will rally to a party advocating it than to those opposing it. Indeed, the abuse that others will heap upon it will rapidly bring all real single taxers to its support. They cannot logically stay away. And, besides, the vote of a few for the truth is better than the vote of many for error. It is not our duty to succeed, but it is our duty to deserve success.

We know that many third parties have failed in American politics, but this is because their principles were incorrect. Thus neither the Know-Nothing, Greenback, Prohibition, Populist, or Socialist parties were correct in their teachings; and the voters so recognized. The one third party which advocated the truth, was the Free Soil or early Republican party, and it won out from the very strength of its cause. Our cause, our truth, is yet more potent if we will but trust it.

But it may be said that things *may* come our way anyhow. We grant the possibility just as we do that the skies may fall to-morrow. But we seriously doubt it. And, besides, if we have a chance of getting what we want *without organizing* or effort, we clearly have a much stronger chance for it *by organizing* and going after it.

LET US WASH OUR HANDS OF IT.

We will not by this weaken the Democratic party, and still less its radical element. We will strengthen it by directing it away from its present errors. It is no kindness or real help to it, or to the republic, to strengthen it in its fallacies. Our duty to it, to the republic, and to ourselves is to refuse to follow it into errors, and to direct it away from them, even against its will. This will give it real strength by giving it correct issues. It will be in the event, only, that the leaders refuse to permit us to act with them, by making our so doing morally impossible, that we will put forth a platform which will hold single taxers together in support of what we know to be right. By doing this, we will conform expediency to the moral law, we will deserve to succeed. To do less than this is to fall short of our duty—is to throw upon us a large share of the moral guilt of the continuance of present social evils, and of the crimes and sufferings which they breed. All single taxers are therefore asked to assist in organizing along these lines.

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No form of government ever yet devised has been equal to the task of making men perfectly happy. None ever will be, for the simple reason that men are not made happy by outward conditions alone, but by the inward condition of their hearts as well. And if we pin our faith to this or that outward social institution we are necessarily disappointed. The more stable the institution the more quickly does it become insufficient. It remains fixed, but man grows. Let us fancy that some very admirable and sound social reform, like the single tax, for instance, could be put in operation. There is no doubt that we should all derive untold benefit from it.—Bliss Carman in the (N. Y.) *Commercial Advertiser*.