

The Philosophy of Freedom

An Open Forum for Single Taxers

Charity bails the boat. Single tax would stop the leak.

DID GOD ORDAIN THE SINGLE TAX?

We should hope not, if it is the same God that the world has claimed as its ruler thus far.

Up to the time that Henry George began to write, no reformer had ever questioned but what the Christian God was back of all political movements, and bestowed His favors where it was the most pleasing for Him to do so. Every despot and tyrant, claimed the Divine favor, and all the suffering and misery was supposed to be the absence of Divine acknowledgement. Faith was made to take the place of reason, and upon that foundation, patriotism as well as all forms of religious beliefs was securely built up.

Every country so far in the world's history has been a form of superstition, in which slavery is a necessity to perfect it, or bring it up to the ideal. So if we look the world over carefully we must come to the conclusion that if the God that the world has claimed in the past as a ruler, is still to continue the same work, we must still look for wars, and rumors of wars, and all the suffering that is possible, where faith takes the place of reason.

Political economy up to the time that Henry George wrote his "Progress and Poverty," was written with the idea, that the laws of trade and all laws governing social life, were as natural as any law of the universe—they might possibly be understood, but could never be changed. This shows how firm a hold the superstitious idea has upon the minds of men even though they may have their minds developed by the best learning the world affords.

It seems sometimes as though, if we should have a scientific form of government, that the fancies of mankind would entirely change. What a vast amount of poetry, and eloquence of the highest order has been produced, to exalt heroes that have been supposed to manifest a devotion that was far above the average man, even equal to the angels, as to Divine approval. The unselfish quality is supposed to be the ideal of true manhood, and so far in the world's history it is the only thing to be relied upon for worldly salvation.

But with a scientific form of government, based upon the single tax, all this would be changed. Sentiment would no longer be needed if science pointed out the way. The world would at once become human, and cease to labor so earnestly to please a God that delights in suffering, caused by slavery or some form of servitude. The selfish quality in the human race can no more be done away with than that power we call gravity that binds the universe together.

The unselfish principle seems to be necessary in order to sustain a system that depends upon servitude to perfect its organization. So the great burden of human teaching has always been to make man believe that he was made wrong, and nothing but a mighty process with Divine aid and power could ever make him right. His great duty was to belittle himself until he became fully conscious that he was the meanest of all creatures that the Maker ever gave existence. One of the greatest mistakes was the endowment of reason.

The great effort of all human organizations has been to do away, or nullify as much as possible the human reason. The church has substituted faith, and to be a true believer faith must be above reason. The political side of life has claimed that loyalty to its institutions was to be the chief element of human thought; so the saying "My own country, right or wrong," has been applauded many times as a declaration of profound wisdom. But the single tax takes the ground that man was made right.

Instead of suppressing his powers, he is to use them with their greatest force and vigor. There was no mistake made when the selfish quality was given, for we are in a world where if rightly directed its benefits will be unbounded. Let every man have a right to the natural opportunities, and all his efforts be they selfish or otherwise, will be a benefit to others as well as himself. The understanding will then become the endowment it was intended to be; one that is to be used by the individual according to his own powers of reasoning.

The individual is the only source through which mankind has ever received any benefits that has given

what we call the comforts of civilization. The food we eat, the clothes we wear is the incarnated thought of many generations and shows the activity of individual minds. There is not a bit of wealth in the world that is not the thought of some individual mind, clothed with material substances so as to be appropriated to the satisfaction of human wants. So the great producer of human wealth is the one that gives the thoughts that can be clothed so as to satisfy human want and desire.

It will be seen by this how necessary it is to develop the individual so as to call forth all that he is capable for the benefit of himself and mankind. It is very easy to see the benefits of the individual in the make-up of history. All inventions that ever did mankind any good, have come through individual minds.

Those which the world has retained have been improved from time to time by thoughtful additions; but in every case the result has been caused by individual action. Every reformation in the world's history has been the result of individual effort, it matters not whether the movement was religious or political. So it is upon the individual that the fate of mankind rests. Society has never produced anything. It is organized upon a fixed basis, and does not wish for anything more than what it already has. The church has all the truth that man will ever need, in its own estimation; and all it wants of the individual is to come under its dominion and be guided by the truth it already possesses.

Political organizations have the same tendency. No new ideas are ever wanted, and the ideal statesman, and the wonderful work of the organization is always in the past. That great endowment called reason is of no use, so the ordinary man might as well be without the endowment. Such is the state of human organization that we call society. It never gave the world any material benefit and it might be questioned whether the mental and spiritual qualities have been benefited by being suppressed or kept in a state of slavery. But the strangest part of the matter is, the pretences and boasts that have always been put forth by human organizations. They have claimed they were organized and sanctioned by God, and receive their power and wisdom from Him.

Such a pretence of course depends upon the minds of the people for its support, and for that reason it is quite easy to see how ready we are to be guided by others. But the God that society has claimed has not been much of a benefactor to the human race. There is nothing in the world that has been given directly by God, and nothing that human society has ever produced, but had better been kept out of the world. The best record belongs to the individual and the God that has endowed him with understanding, is the God we would recognize in the future.

The single tax is the result of individual thought applied to the present system that has been supposed for ages to be under the care and providence of God. It is the first time that human reason has been applied to that human organization called government. And as the light is turned on the darker the picture grows. Like all reform methods the single tax is a reverting back to the individual; but with the application of science we hope to retain the benefits of individual freedom. Society may exist, but not as an overseer or ruler; the individual must always have the chance to contribute his thought and effort, for the good of all.

There is another thing the single tax proposes; and that is that the living shall rule, and conduct the affairs of mankind. So far the world has been conducted according to the will of the dead. We sometimes hear the complaint that the rule of absent landlords is a species of tyranny that ought not to be tolerated. But what shall we say in regard to the rule of those that have entirely passed from the things of time and sense? If we look over the valuable property of the world we shall find a large amount of tribute that is paid to satisfy the will of some party that has long since been silent in death. Many churches are made wealthy, and will continue to accumulate wealth as long as they follow the course marked out by the dead hand. The universities of learning also receive a large share of attention from those that pass into the unknown side of human experience. Why this is so is very hard to decide;

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1 bottle ink.	6 tea spoons.	1 box hair pins.	1 boxwood whisk.
1 box crayons.	6 table spoons.	1 aluminum thimble.	1 brownie mask.
1 lead pencil.	1 sponge.	1 cone ironing wax.	1 dressed doll.
1 leather pocketbook.	1 kite.	1 white handkerchief.	1 heart patty pan.
1 7-inch comb.	1 pair scissors.	1 pair black hose.	1 star patty pan.
1 pocket mirror.	1 pocket knife.	1 needle cabinet.	1 wire coat frame.
1 spool emb. cotton.	1 shaving brush.	1 combination tool, can opener, glass cutter, plier, etc.	1 good hammer.
1 box tacks.	1 watch chain.		6 shelf papers.
1 screw driver.	1 scarf pin.		1 egg beater.

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but most of the endowments are conditional, and for that reason the perpetuation of a fixed condition seems to be the animating desire. Memorial libraries are also numerous, and such institutions are supposed to have a great fashioning power over the human mind. Does it not seem wrong to give the dead such privileges of governing and fashioning human life? If there is such a thing as a fitness of things, can we expect that a church ruled by dead men can give much life to the world? Can we expect an institution of learning to develop new forms of life when the course has been marked out by the dead? We think not; the rule of dead men has proved a failure in the past, and we have no reason to suppose anything better in the future. Let the living rule the world, and develop as far as possible all its hidden mysteries. To travel in the ruts marked out by the dead does not seem to be a rational method. It is founded no doubt upon the superstitions of the past, and cannot exist when science is applied to the affairs of government.

ROBERT H. DEBECK.

Woodfords, Me.

TO SOLVE THE RACE PROBLEM.

When Henry George had completed his great work, Progress and Poverty, he wrote this dedication: "To those who seeing the vice and misery that spring from the unequal distribution of wealth and privilege, feel the possibility of a higher social state, and would strive for its attainment."

Unlike most reformers Mr. George first pointed out an evil and in the same connection showed us the remedy. The evil is the unjust appropriation of land, by the few. The remedy is its restoration to the real owners not the few, but all!

When this is done as it surely will be done, most of the evils which vex and hinder real progress will gradually disappear.

We of the south are confronted by a race problem, not easy of adjustment, yet we realize that the adoption into practice of the single tax idea would go far in the direction of settlement of this and much else that needs drastic treatment.

Once rid of the apparent need for "protective tariffs" we should find much that is now a frictional cause of war between civilized or partially civilized peoples removed. Free trade would make us better acquainted and more disposed to trade than to fight. School houses are better than battle ships, and cheaper.

Everything is possible to a people wise enough to take the first step, to act justly to restore that which is not justly possessed.

The land belongs to the people. Who shall gainsay it?

WILLIAM RILEY BOYD.

Atlanta, Ga.

CANNOT BE SHIFTED

One of the commonest objections to the single tax is that it can be shifted. It is well known that a tax levied on imports is added to the cost and finally paid by the consumer. The same is true of all taxes on labor products. It is therefore only natural that those who have not considered the matter deeply should jump at the conclusion that a tax on land values would have the same effect; the land owner paying the single tax and simply adding it to the price of rent of his land. If this were true the single tax would prove a failure.

But it is not true. All standard writers on political economy agree that a tax levied on land values cannot be shifted; that it must fall on the owner of the land. And the reason is simple. Land is a fixed quantity. We cannot increase or diminish the supply one iota. The owners of the earth have a monopoly and they always charge a monopoly price—all the "traffic will bear." The single tax would take from owners a part of the rent they receive from others without giving them any power to increase that rent. On the contrary, the increased taxation of land values would make land speculation less profitable and all vacant land now held for a rise would be thrown on

the market at whatever price it would bring, and this would have a sympathetic effect on all land. So instead of enabling landlords to charge more on account of the tax they would be compelled to charge less or lose tenants.

The reason a tax on tobacco, for instance, increases the price of tobacco is because the manufacturer must make his profit or he goes out of the business. If he does this he lessens competition and other manufacturers are enabled thereby to increase the price to include the amount of the tax. But land is not being manufactured, like tobacco. It is already made, and the supply cannot be affected by taxation.

The price of an article is governed by supply and demand. If an increased tax curtails the supply the price goes up. Taxation of labor products therefore must increase their cost. But taxation of land values, the supply being necessarily limited, can only result in making land cheaper.

The single tax would eat out all the profit of land speculation and no one would desire land except for use. This would open up opportunities for all and be equivalent to the discovery of another continent. What effect this would have on wages we will leave for the reader himself to decide.

P. W. SCHWANDER.

Houston, Tex.

Co-operative Land Buying

Land speculators have long since learned that they can buy land for less dollars per acre when taken in large bodies; farmers and home-seekers are just beginning to find this out. In the last few weeks several parties of land buyers from Iowa have gone together and bought large tracts along the Republican river; when a contract was made for the purchase of the land, they divided it up to suit themselves and had deeds made accordingly.

The following tracts offer an excellent opportunity for several home-seekers to go together and buy either of these tracts, or all of them. It will enable them to get some good land very cheap.

The first is a tract of 2,115 acres, nearly all fenced; 1,050 acres under high state of cultivation, 1,100 acres of very best alfalfa land; some timber; the Republican river runs through this land; 4 wells and wind mills, tanks, cisterns, etc. Three sets of improvements; two miles from McCook. Much of this is good hay land. Price, \$18 per acre. This piece is known as No. 1026.

Another tract of 1750 acres deeded land and 640 acres of school land leased; 1,400 acres of alfalfa land—some now growing; 400 acres in cultivation; nearly all fenced; good improvements; 600 acres of good hay land, now ready to mow. This ranch is in the Republican valley, 15 miles from McCook and between two railroad stations. Price complete \$19,000. This is No. 1027.

Also an 800-acre tract, nearly all fenced; 700 acres alfalfa and sugar beet land; 200 acres cultivated; nice grove, plenty of hay land. This would make two or more splendid farms; two sets of improvements; two and a half miles from town. Price, \$9,500. This is No. 1028.

It should be remembered that the sugar beet factories at Grand Island, Ames and Norfolk last year made thorough tests of that soil for sugar beet raising, which proved successful. There is a large acreage of sugar beets in Red Willow county this year and the prospects are bright for a sugar beet factory at McCook in the near future. This together with the alfalfa industry insures a bright future for Red Willow and surrounding counties; and values are sure to double in a few years.

For full information regarding the above land or any other land along the Republican river write to Weber & Farris, Lincoln, Neb.

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