THE RELIGION OF THE LAND QUESTION

Address Delivered at the Theological and Sociological Conference at Victoria College by W. A. Douglass, B. A.

In introducing this subject it is necessary to point out some of our social relationships.

A sower went forth to sow. That seed he nestled in the soil, where, nurtured by its fertility, fanned by the wind, moistened by the rain and the dew, and heated by the sun, it sprang up in the activity of vitality and rejoiced the heart of the husbandman by returning him twentyfold, thirtyfold or a hundredfold.

From the time Adam first stuck his spade in the Garden of Eden to the present day, invariably the sower has looked for abundance where he began with scarcity.

At the same time another man is standing in front of a forge. Into that furnace he has cast the crude ore. He passes it through the various processes of purifying, rolling and fashioning, and behold the result—the ponderous locomotive, the still more ponderous engines of the ocean steamer, or the delicately adjusted watch.

Where this man commenced with a mass of crude ore he strove by every possible means that ingenuity could suggest, to produce an abundance of skilfully adapted machinery.

Between this farmer and this mechanic there is a most intimate relationship. The farmer wants the machinery, and the machinist wants the crop. Each has done his utmost to produce in the greatest abundance. Each has toiled, and, therefore, the exchange involves toil for toil, sacrifice for sacrifice, benefit for benefit, mutual enrichment and mutual elevation. By each man thus attending to the particular duty for which he is fitted, the combined product is vastly greater in quantity and better in quality.

By extending illustrations of this kind I could show you that it is on this relation of special function, and exchange of riches for riches, or service for service, that depend the growth, the continuance and the development of our civilization and the possibility of the success of religion.

Do you think that this statement is too rash and not exactly in accord with the truth? Then I ask your attention to this consideration: Suppose we abolish all possibility of exchange and compel every man to erect his own home, make his own clothing, provide his own literature and newspaper, construct his own railroad and telegraph, work out his own philosophy and religion, what would be the result? You know just as well as I do, that the result would be destitution the most abject, and barbarism the most gross.

Destroy all exchange, and we destroy at once all civilization.

This is the reason why I state that it is upon the relationship of service for service that depends the possibility of civilization and of religion.

An Essential Difference.

Permit me now to call your attention to another relationship.

The growth of population on this continent is without parallel in the history of the world. Beginning in the United States and Canada at about 4,000,000 at the time of the revolutionary war, it has doubled every 25 years, till it now amounts to about 80,000,000. This population has not spread with uniformity, but has crowded more and more into the large cities, so that while the general population has doubled every 25 years, the civic population has doubled every 10 years.

Let us now observe what effect this increase of population must have on the amount of available land. When the first settler comes to any townsite there are a hundred or a thousand acres at his disposal. But when another settler comes there is but half the land available for each. With every doubling of the population there must be a halving of the available, so that at last where there were a hundred acres available for the first settler, there are at last a hundred or a thousand persons crowding on to one acre.

While industry is ever striving by every possible device to multiply products, increased population must inevitably divide and subdivide the land. Here we have two movements, one ever multiplying, the other ever dividing and subdividing.

A Crucial Question.

Can any of you here see the slightest parallel or resemblance between these two movements, labor beginning with a few seeds and ending with the abundance of the harvest, and population beginning with a superabundance of land for each, and at last ending with a thousand people crowding on to one acre? Is not the difference between these two things just as great as the difference between north and south, food and poison, debit and credit or liability and asset?

Now, what could we think of the navigator who would ignore the difference between the north and the south, the physician who would ignore the difference between food and poison, the accountant who would disregard the difference between debit and credit, or the preacher who would deny the difference between good and evil? Would we not at once declare that this was the most utter madness?

And yet in our legislation for taxation, or recognition of the rights of property, we treat the multiplication of goods and the division of land as though they were one and the same thing. The world-wide difference between the results of the energy of individuals in the raising of crops and the building of houses, and the division of the land caused by increase of population, are treated as though they were one and the same thing.

Who Should Own the Crop.

When farmers make crops abundant, when builders make buildings abundant, and other toilers strive by their energy to make other goods abundant, it is universally conceded that these toilers have a right to a share in this abundance. But as population increases in any center and thus makes land relatively more scarce, is it in accordance with justice that if I hold the title deed to that land I should be enabled to say to these toilers, "A large share of that abundance belongs to me, and only a fraction of that abundance belongs to you"? Do you think that is the way God intends us to divide the wealth of the world? that those who produce everything should receive in many cases only a fragment of what they produce, and that those who produce nothing should enjoy in many cases overflowing fortunes?

If there is any hesitation in your minds as to the answer that ought to be returned to that question, let me call your attention to what must be the effect on society if we adopt that method of dividing the products of industry.

Suppose for argument sake that one of my ancestors had acquired possession of a few acres of land in the center of New York city a hundred or two hundred years ago. At that time, when population was sparse and land abundant, he could say to those who wished to occupy that land, "Pay me a dollar a year." As population increased he could say, "Pay me $10 a year." "As it still further increased he could say, "Pay me $100 a year." After another increase he could say, "Pay me $1,000 a year, $10,000, $50,000, $100,000," and if I were heir to that estate and the land were well situated for business, I could claim from the occupants $500,000 yearly for every acre in the estate.

We would witness eventually this

Monstrous Development.

The more these people paid men, the more they would have to pay; the more they paid, the greater would be their debt, the larger their obligation. It is a debt that paying never pays. It is a debt that continues year after year, generation after generation, and age after age, to the end of all time. It is a debt that ever grows, becoming larger and larger with every increase in the population, and every improvement in the mechanical arts. It is a relationship that severs society in twain, placing on one part the whole burden of maintaining civilization, and then allowing that part but a fragment of its advantages, while I would be relieved from all its obligations. I need do nothing to support myself or to support my fellows, and I would be free from all obligation to do anything for the support of government. I would be wholly exempt from all taxes.

It is a relation that ever drives the two poles of society further and further apart; labor always striving by every device to achieve fortune, but ever driven back close to the borderland of penury, crowded down into stuffy tenements, lowly hovels, sweat shops and slums, till all the sweetness and joy is pressed out of life, while I would be carried up to greater and greater fortune. During bitter nights of winter there may be seen at the same moment the gorgeous revelry of a Bradley-Martin ball, with its extravagance so wasteful, that it smites the conscience of the world with its wickedness, and at the same time a file of men standing on Broadway through the long hours awaiting the toll of the midnight hour, that they may secure a loaf of stale bread to carry home to their famishing children. What a sight in a professedly Christian nation? Injustice enthroned, righteousness trampled beneath our feet, the brotherhood of man nullified, the right of the child of God to the gifts of God ignored, the right of the toiler to the product of his industry denied, the essential claims of religion set at naught, is it any wonder that we see such appalling failures in our civilization?

How Shall We Escape

from this thraldom of injustice, and how shall we replace the presence of severance and hostility by the unity of harmony and good-will?

Behold the multitude of toilers on the farm, in the factory, at the forge, and see them striving with every possible ingenuity to fill up the storehouses with wealth to the point of repletion. Note the millions of value these toilers thus produce. Then note again the vast amount of value that comes to the land in our large cities and which increases with every addition to the population.

The first value is due to the energy of individuals, while the second value is due to the combined presence of the multitude.

Here we find two distinct sources of value. What is the appropriate destination of these values? When a man puts in the seed, fertilizes the soil, fights off the weeds, the cut-worm and the weevil, to whom should belong that crop? In the name of all that is holy, should not the product belong to the producer? And as the value of the land is due to the presence of the community, does it not belong honestly to the community, and is not its appropriate place the public treasury for public purposes?

Let us once adopt the simple expedient of avoiding the taxation of improvements and of confining taxation to the values caused by the communal presence then what would be the effect on society? No longer could any man use land as an agent of extortion. No longer could one man use land for the impoverishment of his fellow. Instead of one man being able to say to his fellow: "You must surrender the abundance of your product to me," he would be compelled to produce some commodity or to render some service, and then he would meet his fellow with an exchange of benefit for benefit, and riches for riches.

Having thus established relations of harmony between man and man, having removed the temptations which now rouse the cupidity in extortionate speculations, having established conditions which would tend to develop the best there is in man instead of the worst, as we do at the present day, what limits should we place to the rapid advance of our civilization? With plenty for all, with leisure for the cultivation of the higher faculties, with justice enthroned and man brought into harmony with his environment, would we not be warranted in looking for the speedy advent of that time of which poets have sung, for which martyrs have died, and whose consummation will be the glory of the kingdom of God?

Vote No. 322 on the ballot.

LANDLORDS REAP THE BENEFIT

The Increased Production by Inventions Is Absorbed in Land Rent.

The productiveness of labor has been increased a hundred fold by the introduction of labor-saving devices. Yet the workingman receives but the same as his forefathers—a bare living and business enterprises fail.

If labor still receives but a bare subsistence and capitalized enterprises fail, who gets this great difference in the productiveness of labor and the labor-saving device "or capital"? The landlord. Increase the productiveness of labor a thousandfold and who will get the whole benefit? The landlord. Increase the productiveness of land a thousandfold and who will get the whole benefit? The landlord. Both the increased productiveness to labor and the increased productiveness of land will always go to the landlord. The wages of the one born to no estate save that of a toiler will remain the same as before. Contradictory though it may seem, yet it is none the less true that to increase a thousandfold the productiveness of land or the productiveness of labor, is only to increase a thousandfold the huge volumes of the streams of wealth pouring annually into the pockets of the Rockefellers, Astors, Carnegies and Morgans—the great landlords of our high civilization.

The general profits of capital and wages of labor go on practically unchanged, even in the midst of all our progress in mechanical inventions. Work as they will and plan as they may, there are wiley plotters above them who get the cream. The margin above "bare subsistence"—"the bread line"—is all absorbed by the unearned increment in the form of royalties and rents. No power, no invention, no increase of economy or skill can help the landless man. Nothing but a free access to nature can save him. Otherwise his doom is fixed from birth. Here are chains he cannot break, writhe and twist as he will. Neither science or art nor religion can alleviate his condition. Equality of opportunity to live will remain everlastingly a myth without equality of access to land.

THE EXEMPTION AND MECHANIC

How the Exemption From Taxes of Improvements Benefits All Labor.

The mechanic has much to gain from the proposed exemption of dwellings and furniture, livestock and farm implements from taxation. It would place more taxes on land values and less on the products of labor.

The mechanic is not interested in protecting the land monopolist from his folly in supposing that the community will always give him the land values it (the community) creates by its own labors and enterprise. The higher taxes are on land values the more land will be used. Either the owner will use it himself or the man he sells it to will, for the more taxes on land values the less it will pay to hold it idle. When a heretofore idle piece of land is used the mechanic is employed. The more who are employed the fewer idle men and the higher the wages.

You are asked to vote the tax burden off your home and furniture. God and the state helps the man who helps himself.

It is the small home that is jumped on by the deputy assessor everywhere. Some years ago it was ascertained that in several large cities homes worth less than $1,500 were assessed pretty close to their real values, while idle lots when held for speculation in large tracts by millionaires were assessed for a rough average of about 15 per cent and other property of millionaires frequently escaped altogether.

The people of Oregon are being cinched on their little household dunder and will be cinched more if they do not vote for the amendment that exempts them. The cottage of the laborer should not be taxed. The dwelling of the producer is doing no harm to the community. To exempt it from taxation encourages more homes, which is what we want. Let the lots absorb the burden shifted from the dwellings. There are seven idle lots in Portland to one that is used. Let them pay more taxes and the user would pay less.

The manufacturing establishments aside from the land they occupy are assessed at about 2 per cent of the total assessment of the state. The proposed exemption exempting them from taxation would also exempt the farmers' livestock, amounting to twice the value of the manufacturing plants. In addition the farmer would escape taxation on his implements and improvements, household furniture and orchards which amount to several times the value of the manufacturing plants. Yet some people tell the Oregon agriculturists that this scheme would allow the rich manufacturer to put his taxes on the farmer. It isn't safe to bet that a majority of the farmers of Oregon are fools, who cannot read or write and do not need any facts but only assertions in order to vote as they are told. Some of them are from "Missouri" in more ways than one.

Vote No. 322 on the ballot.

NATION FOLLOWS HENRY GEORGE

Dr. Lyman Abbott in Speech Declares Roosevelt Sets Pace.

By John E. Lathrop.

Washington, D. C., Feb. 24.—At the end of the great National Religious Educational convention here the other day the address of Dr. Lyman Abbott of New York, editor of the Outlook, was declared to have been the most illustrious heard during the sessions, at which some of the greatest men of the nation spoke.

It was, therefore, occasion for some surprise to hear him select the appearance of the late Henry George's "Progress and Poverty," in 1879, as the beginning of the movement for the proper reform of American ideas as to taxation and the now powerful propaganda for the conservation of the nation's resources.

A few weeks ago a close friend said to me that President Roosevelt expected that, if this administration won a permanent place in history, it would be because of his advocacy of the purposes of the inland waterways commission, which is working on a plan to change the methods of disposing of the public lands, largely along the line advanced by Henry George—that the national resources, those given by the Almighty to the race, should not be subject to the taking from the people by a few to be held forever as a means wherewith to extort tribute from those who otherwise compose society.

Dr. Abbott's Plea.

In Dr. Abott's address, he made a most powerful plea to the nation to gain appreciation of the rights of the worker as distinguished from the one who profits merely from something that God made and which the man has appropriated.

It was the subject of common remark after the Abbott speech had been ended, that a generation ago, when George's "Progress and Poverty" was so fiercely discussed, and referred to as a chimera and a thing impossible, it would not have been believed had it been predicted that in 1908 so great a man as Henry Ward Beecher's successor would be heard in the nation's capital city tracing directly from that book the fundamental reform now being wrought out.

It is constantly iterated and reiterated that President Roosevelt, W. J. Bryan and Senator La Follette have phrased their keynote utterance along a line exactly in keeping with Henry George's once excoriated beliefs, and that the whole program on which the inland waterways commission is working is but a vindication of the conclusions reached via the Henry George logic.

Basic Idea.

The basic idea, as set forth by Dr. Abbott, is that nature stored the natural implements and materials for the whole race, and that if the race is not to be industriously enslaved, society must have the current fruits of those natural resources, the holder having only his own product, and paying to society his toll of what he uses but does not himself produce.

Dr. Abbott's address produced a profound impression in Washington, and is said to have been noticed by eminent men in the congress, on account of his position as an exponent of correct economic thought.

Dr. Abbott even went so far as to assert that most of the ills now afflicting the nation arise wholly or are referable in large part to the method heretofore pursued in disposing of the public lands and resources, which has fastened as a leech on the nation's industrial system aggregations which fatten on others.—Daily Journal.

Vote No. 322 on the ballot.

NOTICE.

Keep this paper 10 years and collect the unearned increment from it, such as accrues to land.

Oregon Tax Reform Association, 704 Marquam Building, Portland, Oregon.

Dear Sirs—One of the most serious handicaps to business is found in our local tax laws. The manufacturer especially realizes this fact. Taxes are laid upon his raw material, his finished product, his machinery, his buildings and everything else entering into his business. The removal of this heavy burden would undoubtedly be a great boon to industry, and I am glad to learn of the movement in Oregon to amend the state constitution so that this relief may be granted. Should this movement be successful, a large number of manufacturers from other states will surely locate in Oregon and the benefit to all classes of the state's population will be enormous. As a purely business proposition the proposed amendment will be a paying investment for the state. It would not be possible to devise any better plan of insuring employment to its labor and increased patronage to its business men.

Its defeat would be the worst kind of a business blunder.

Yours truly, THE F. H. LAWSON COMPANY,

FENTON LAWSON, President.

OLD HAYSEED AND MR. SINGLE TAX

Well, I'll be dinged, if here isn't old Single Tax coming down the road," said Oregon Hayseed, "and I'm going to lick the socks off him, sure. He is trying to rob me of my land all the time, dang his ornery picture."

At this point Single Tax came briskly forward and grasped old Oregon Hayseed by the hand confidently and cordially. "Well, old friend," said Single Tax, "have you still a notion that I am trying to rob you of your land?"

"You bet I have, and what's more I am going to pound you out of sight next June. See if I don't."

"I have been operating in New Zealand a number of years," replied the object of the Oregon Hayseed's wrath, "and the farmers are the best friends I have there. They invite me to come and have never invited me to go, once I have come among them."

"Sure and honest?" queried the old man, peering intently at his coming antagonist.

"Cross my heart on it," assured S. T. "New South Wales—a state as big as this, full of farmers, too—just passed an act that will cause me to come right up close alongside of them. Town and county swinging right in after me to live with 'em. Read up a little and you will find it just as I tell you."

"Well, mebby so, mebby so, but how about my land? What would you do with my land?"

"Your land will stay right with you, just the same. I will take the taxes from your improvements and livestock, furniture and implements, creameries, cheese and condensed milk factories, canneries and woolen mills. That amounts to several times the value of your land. You do not own the land, either, in Oregon at large as a whole, or taken county by county. Speculators own it, corporations, land grants, timber thieves, mines, swamp-land grabbers. The cities have more land measured in dollars than you have."

"But you will raise the taxes on my land, ding bing your slick tongue," said the old Oregon Hayseed resentfully."

"You bet I will," was the reply, "but for every dollar I increase your taxes on your land I will take off three from your improvements and personal property and make the vacant land carry the burden. Some say I do three times better than that."

"But, look here, you, what about exempting factories. I won't stand for these rich manufacturers cinching me with the taxes they should pay."

"Stuff! Who filled you with that sawdust? Why man, all the assessed values in Oregon of the manufacturing plants do not equal half your livestock as assessed. It is surprising that you do not realize that these manufactories are largely creameries, cheese factories and canneries. The more factories the closer you are to market and the bigger demand for your products. Don't be a chump. Manitoba farmers are laughing at you now, for paying taxes on every stick and chick. They pay nothing on anything but the land, thanks to me, and all their other property goes free."

"By the eternal," cried the Oregon Hayseed, "if I find what you say is so there are some eminent journalists and statesmen who have been lying to me that will have to eat dirt!"

"It's so all right, " smiled S. T., "and I will help you prove it."

"Come to dinner with me," invited his one-time enemy. "I want to ask some more questions."

And the two went arm in arm to the well-taxed home of the Oregon farmer.

FRED C. DENTON.

The Wind Lords

"It is related that a certain eastern potentate fell into the impecunious condition common to many of his predecessors, and set his wits to work to devise a remedy. A farmer of imposts, who had often aided him in his dilemma, came to his rescue. He offered him 60,000 tomans for all the winds that should ever blow over Cashmere. The monarch at first affected to be staggered at the proposition. He was unable to find anything in precedents to warrant it, but although a believer in the doctrine that whatever is is right, he was forced to admit that a monarch may introduce useful innovations. Of course it was assumed that he was the supreme owner and disposer of all things in his dominions, not only for his own brief, erratic span of life, but for all time, and so he came to the conclusion that as everything in the world had been sold which could be sold, there was no good reason why the winds, unstable though they might be, should be exempted if a purchaser could be found. After a proper amount of preliminary haggling, a sale was made, and the transaction legalized by all that signatures, seals and parchment could do for it.

"Before the public had fairly got over laughing at the absurdity of this novel bargain, the owner of the wind issued a proclamation forbidding all persons in Cashmere from using his wind to turn their windmills, winnow their corn, propel their vessels, or employ it in any other manner, until they had first entered into agreements with him and obtained leases for the various localities, covenanting to pay certain amounts for the privilege. Then the laughing turned to lamentation. The monarch met the torrent of petitions and complaints by affecting to deplore the circumstance. He could not foresee, of course, all that had occurred, but his sacred word was involved. Rulers of that type are usually very particular about their sacred word. Driven to desperation, the inhabitants contributed the amount that had been paid for the wind, and tendered it to the sovereign so that this unheard-of transaction could be cancelled.

"The matter was not to be so easily arranged. The owner of the winds of Cashmere would not think of such a thing. He had acquired a vested right in them. Since it had become purchasable the wind had greatly risen—in price at least. Wind stocks were on the upward market. The owner insisted that his title was good. He did not claim it merely by his right of discovery of the commercial value of the wind, or that he had been the first to preempt this privilege but he had fairly bought it from the representative of government, and declared that his title was begirt, and founded on all that was sacred in law on the theory of eminent domain and supreme authority. It would be altogether unfair to ask him to surrender this valuable privilege for anything less than what it might bring him in case he should be allowed to keep it. The proposition of the people was merely a bald scheme of robbery. It was subversive of all property rights; was socialistic, agrarian, and revolutionary; and to force him to accept a price so inadequate would strike a fatal blow at the best interests of society and undermine the whole fabric on which the rights of property rested.

"This reasoning was, of course, entirely conclusive to the monarch who was undoubtedly the confederate of the farmer of imposts, but, as human endurance can only be stretched to certain limits, it was agreed between them that a fair price for the winds, at that date, would be 10 times what was originally paid for it. This amount was finally raised by a long-suffering people, who merely exacted a promise from the commercial monarch that he would never sell the wind again, but permit it in God's providence to blow over them free and unrestricted as of yore."

How absurd this tale appears! But, when we have done laughing at these foolish people of Cashmere, let us remember that land is at least as necessary to life and labor, and is quite as much the free gift of nature as are the winds of heaven. Yet we have foolishly allowed nearly all the land (and a good deal of the water) to become the private "property" of individuals; and some of these are now demanding "compensation" before they will allow the people to use their own.

GET OFF OUR BACKS.

By Alfred Denton Cridge.

Give us not charity, chilly and slim,
Justice is better, though oft visaged grim.
Where charity flourishes justice is lax;
Give us our earnings, and
Get off our backs.

Give not your sermon, so long and so cold,
Covered with sugar, and rhetoric and mould;
Give us our products; free from all tax;
Let rent bear the burden, and
Get off our backs.

Give not a pension, asylum, or jail;
Give us our land, else the nation shall fail;
Laws you have given us, stacks upon stacks;
But never the justice to
Get off our backs.

Lo! there is wailing from west and from east,
Millions are hungry, while millionaires feast,
Toilers are burdened by rent's crushing tax;
Land Lords and Money Lords,
Get off our backs.

Cast off your trammels from commerce and trade;
Give us the land the Creator has made;
Place on land values the burden and tax,
Land-grabbing vampires, clear
Off our backs.

Then would the heart of each toiler rejoice;
Then would the tongue of true freedom find voice;
Then would rise homes on these desolate tracts,
Held idle and useless by
Men on our backs.

Then would true love in each vined cottage dwell;
Wealth could not measure what greed could not sell,
Hearth-stone and roof-tree unburdened from tax—
Tax-free means heart-free, so
Get off our backs.

Vote No. 322 on the ballot.

A Game of Cards

Take three cards laid in succession openly on a table. Let the card in the middle be called No. 2, the card on the left No. 1 and the card on the right No. 3. Let all three cards represent tracts of land of the same assessed value. Take a fourth card and place on the table and let it represent improvements placed on the once idle tract to the same value of that tract. Place on each card of the four cards before you three beans. The tract or card in the middle has resting on it six beans, three for improvement card and three for the land, the other tracts have but three beans each. Call each card $1,000 in value, each bean $30. This represents the present system of taxation with just and honest assessors. With a single tax on land values, exclusive of improvements, the game would be played by placing one of the three beans now resting on the card representing improvements upon the card representing the unimproved tract on the left, and another bean on the card representing the unimproved tract on the right. This would leave each of the cards for the three tracts bearing four beans. Play this game right and you will rise up from it a single taxer. Beats a chess game for opportunity to study and think, and any number can play at it. Not against the law, either, to play it.

Vote No. 322 on the ballot.

MEN FINED FOR BEAUTIFYING OREGON

Paint your house, more taxes. Put out some flowers and a lawn, more taxes. Get a little furniture to make your home life comfortable and artistic, more taxes. Put up a woodshed, more taxes. Shingle your roof, more taxes. Fight with your neighbor, more taxes, called fines. What is the difference? Vote for the tax amendment and stop such foolishness as taxing (fining) men for improving and upbuilding the community as if they had committed misdemeanors. Remember 323 on the ballot and vote her in by the largest majority ever given any proposition in Oregon. Manitoba, Alberta, New Zealand, New South Wales, have shown in the folly of taxing everything in sight as we pretend to do in Oregon. Hunch Oregon along to the head of the procession and help yourself at the same time.

The farmer buys a horse to improve the breed and is taxed as if he had committed some wrong on the community. If he buys a bit of wild land and holds it idle he is rewarded with very low assessments and encouraged to keep it that way. Some civilized communities have proved it better to place no taxes on livestock. Manitoba and Ontario, for instance.

Farmers in Oregon have in so many instances, in every county in the state, been raised on their assessments for making little improvements on their houses, barns, fences, chicken-houses, corrals and granaries that it is a wonder they are as thrifty as they are in spite of all the opposition and discouragements of our antiquated, absurd, complicated and unintelligible tax laws. In Ontario, Canada, the farmers are shipping highbred cows and bulls all over the world. No taxes on livestock. The entire province of Manitoba collects no tax on the farmer's machinery. Why should an Oregon farmer pay taxes on his wagon, harrow, reaper, mower, combined harvester, gangplow, cream separator, fanning-mill, water tank, or parlor carpet? How the Manitoba farmer would give the Oregon farmer the ha ha! if he deliberately voted taxes on them to remain. All these things exceed the value of the true farmer's land. The half farmer, half land speculator should reform. He will be better off with a well-tilled field than a section of brush, thistles and rutty roads for miles around.

Labor in city and country now pays all taxes. Always will have to, too. No tax system on earth can dodge that. Labor foots the bills, all bills. Always did, always will. Tax reformers who are informed beyond the alphabet of taxation know that. But now, in Oregon, the worker carries the land speculator on one shoulder and the government—national, state and local—on the other. Has to. Can't dodge 'em. The speculative values placed on land and constantly hunched up by speculators whenever and wherever capital and labor are willing to pay the price asked, are all paid by the producer in the end—the man who works with hand or brain for the development of the community. What does the speculator do to help? Nothing whatever. Gets out of the way as the highwayman does when he has obtained all the traffic will bear. The tax amendment will help crowd him out of the way without levying so much tribute—and finally eliminate him from the problem altogether. Vote for it and help along the time when the producer can drop three-fourths of his burden—the idle speculator in God's earth. No. 322.

Advertise Oregon? Certainly. Get up your Rose Carnivals. Splendid! Attractive! Boom-de-aye! Yip. Hire special boomers for special towns. Spend a few hundred thousand on special editions, traveling exhibits, and lantern slide agents. All good. Some better than others, but all help the land speculator to stand up the capitalist and the worker who comes, as a result of these different processes, to invest or to live.

But right here, my gentle boomer, let us whisper with a megaphone, that the proposed tax amendment, No. 322, remember, will advertise the state further, faster, louder, stronger, longer, than all the carnivals, festivals, special editions, special agents, special trains and illustrated lectures rolled into one, that Oregon could put forth in half a century. Fact! Sure! Think how it would travel from here to London and from there to Borneo and to Patagonia. Oregon taxes no man on his home, his tools or his livestock. The hike for Oregon would beat the rush for California in the early 50's.

Vote No. 322 on the ballot.

For the Common Weal

From the Labor Press.

"All things work together for good."

In the state pamphlet containing the measures to be voted on by the people in June no argument appears against the single tax amendment. Two men were selected to draft such an argument, however, and they drafted it. They were Gilstrap of the Eugene Register and Dixon of the Canby Tribune. But when their argument was passed up to the legal lights of the opposition it was decided the dope was so faulty it would tend to strengthen rather than weaken the support of the single tax amendment. That is the trouble with nearly all the argument now being set forth by writers opposing the amendment. Their first half dozen lines is proof positive to all who have studied the single tax question that they have no conception of what they are trying to oppose. Thus they are unconsciously aiding the measure, and thus it is that the forces of truth and justice use all means to a common end. Vote for the single tax amendment.

An acre was created in the beginning and its values are created by the community. A gentleman cow comes into being as a direct result of labor, arrives at maturity solely through labor, and finally dies in spite of utmost labor. The acre continues to exist until the sun turns black and the oceans dry up. No value attaches to the g. c. other than what labor creates, and that value perishes with the animal. The acre increases in value whether the owner works or not. The g. c. would soon starve did not labor feed it daily.

THE OREGONIAN AND SINGLE TAX

The Philosophy of Henry George Expounded With Editor's Error Corrected.

The Single Tax.

The theory of the single tax is important to the citizens of Oregon just now because next June they must accept or reject it by their ballots. The basis of the theory is a proposition concerning the origin of values which was elaborated by Henry George in his famous book, "Progress and Poverty." This book was powerfully thought out and has had more influence on the minds of men than any other economic work since Adam Smith wrote his "Wealth of Nations." It is so suffused with ethical passion that the fundamental fallacy which it rests upon is obscured and men are converted to the single-tax theory upon reading it, more because their feelings are excited than because their minds are convinced.

The fallacy is involved in the proposition concerning the origin of values which was mentioned above. Henry George arranges values in two sharply distinct classes. The first includes land values; the second all others. Land values, he argues, are created by the concerted efforts of society; all others by individual effort. Hence land values belong to society and may properly be confiscated in the form of taxes, while all other values being the fruit of individual effort, should be exempt from taxation for two reasons. In the first place, it is sheer robbery for society to deprive the individual of the fruit of his labor; in the second place, it discourages him from further effort. The tax upon land values is therefore the only tax which is absolutely just and the only one which does not penalize abstinence, industry and prudence. This is the argument.

Now this conclusion, we contend, is fallacious. The Oregonian admits that land values are enhanced if not created by the growth of population and the concerted labors of society. It also admits the immediate inference from this that society may rightfully confiscate as much of them as may be necessary by taxation; but here we part company with the single-taxers. In our opinion, land values are not by any means the only ones which are created by the growth of population and the concerted labors of society. Hence, they are not the only ones which are rightfully subject to taxation. If it can be shown that the value of cattle or houses or stock in a manufacturing company or money or anything else is wholly or partially created by society and not by the individual, then it must be admitted that all those things should share with land values the burden of taxation. The Oregonian, in common with all sound, economic thinkers, agrees with so much of the logic of the single-taxers as goes to justify the taxation of socially-created values and condemn the taxation of those created by individual effort; but it can see no reason why the socially-created value of land should be treated differently from that portion of the value of cattle, stocks, and buildings which is created in the same way.

The single-taxers deny that there is any part of the value of domestic animals, houses and so forth, which is created by "social" forces. The Oregonian has printed a number of letters where they do their best to establish their view, but they have not succeeded and they never will succeed. To illustrate their futility, let us recall the history of the value of cattle upon the western prairies. Before the railroads came through, these cattle were partially unsalable. A man might own them by tens of thousands and still dwell in poverty because there was no population at hand to establish an economic demand for them. Then the railroads came and instantaneously the western herds acquired enormous increment of value, not because of feeding, or care, or any betterment whatever in the animals themselves, but because of the virtual proximity of a population to consume them. Here we have a case of unearned increment so glaringly patent that no sane person can dispute it. Usually the unearned increment in the values of personal property is somewhat obscured by being mingled with values that are created by individual effort. Nevertheless it is invariably present and with a little thought it can be separated and considered apart. It is absurd, therefore, to say that land values are the only proper objects of taxation. The same reasons which justify the taxation of land values apply in exactly the same way to personal property and justify its taxation also. If it is right to confiscate the unearned increment in the one case, so it is, in the other. If it is right to tax land, then it is wrong not to tax personal property.—Oregonian editorial.

The Editorial Corrected

This argument in regard to the cattle is one that if it could be sustained would raise the editor of the Oregonian to the rank of the greatest economic thinker the world ever saw. If cows and horses have an unearned increment attached to them the landlords of England and all Europe would welcome any man able to demonstrate it with wealth, honor, titles and undying fame. Henry George would fade into a mere attempter to change things—a failure. As an actual fact, if cows have an unearned increment atached to them a cow would be more valuable in a large city than in a small one. A horse in Beaverton would not be worth as much as a horse in Portland. The cattle that roamed the free lands of the eastern Oregon hills before the railroad came represented a total labor cost of a very few dollars. With the advent of rapid communication and transportation came necessity for winter feeding, fencing, rent and price of land, all of which entered into the total cost of the cow or steer. Taxes were also levied upon the cattle and the necessary greater improvements of cattle ranches. If a man could have a herd of cattle fed for him at public expense, the calves and yearlings eaten by wolves and frozen to death replaced and all labor in connection with the breeding and fattening of a four-year-old steer paid out of the public treasury, then there would be an unearned increment going to the owner. A piece of land surrounded by a rapidly growing community increases in value at the expense of the community because it is not required to return to that community what that community annually creates and maintains—the rental value. This makes the acre return to the owner something he has not produced, as would be the case with the herd of cattle fed at public expense. A cow dies, but an acre never dies. What is the unearned value attached to Stanford's famous Electioneer now? On the average a trotting horse costs in labor all it sells for. Competition and the natural fecundity of the equine race would soon bring down any unearned increment to a minimum. A house does not increase in value by reason of the growth of the community. It rots away, crumbles to dust, while the acre has increased a thousandfold.

VOTE FOR NUMBER 322 ON THE BALLOT-