

Your Life Is Your Own

—This Is Undisputed

Now See What Follows From That:

A College Boy's Question Answered

by EDITOR L. D. BECKWITH

Sophomore. "Mr. Beckwith, you insist that Economics is a science as exact as physics or chemistry. What I do not understand is: **How can you know that; where do you get a start from which you can go forward, feeling satisfied that your premise is secure and that each step you take is provable?**"

Answer. "Your question is fair and very well directed! **I begin with the fact that your life is your own!**

"But it means nothing to tell you that your life is yours and that you have the right to live, unless you have the right to **support your life.**

"And it means nothing to tell you that you have the right to support your life, unless you have the right of free access to the only source from which men can support their lives,—**the land; for to deny you access to land is to deny you life, and to require you to pay some fellow creature for that access is to say that you live, not as a right, but by his permit.**

"Nor would freedom of access to land insure your right to live your own life, unless you have the right of free access to the **most desirable sites;** for, otherwise, you are at the mercy of those staking out more strategic sites than yours.

"But if you have all these rights you are still not secure, unless you have the right to **work, uninterrupted,** on the land from which, and on which, you support yourself.

"And if you have all those rights, you are still but a slave, unless you have the right to the **unchallenged possession of all you produce,** with nothing deducted,—not even for taxes!

"Nor does all this make you a freeman, unless you have, also, the right to **save your wages and to let them accumulate** to the limit of your ability.

"Nor are you yet secure, unless you have in addition the right to **exchange** your wealth for other wealth that you may prefer,—perhaps because the other may possess the power of natural increase and so would further enrich you.

"And though you have all these rights, all this is but an empty mockery, unless you have also the right to **use what**

you save and the right to the unchallenged possession of the return upon that use,—that is, to the calf of your cow, to interest on your capital commensurate with the potential advantage arising from the fact that it is exchangeable for cattle, or other forms of wealth having the power of increase.

“Any denial of any of these nine rights is a denial of your right to life; and the slightest limitation upon any of these rights (beyond the limitations resulting from the equal rights of other persons), is a limitation of your right to live,—and is, therefore, by that much an attack upon your life.

“While these nine rights mean that no one may own land, they mean that land value is, like all other labor products, the property of the producer; they mean that each person is entitled to his share of the community land value and that he is by rule nine entitled to his share of the return upon the community land value; namely, to his share of the rent.

“As it is impossible to distribute the rent in cash, this must be done by collecting it and using it for the public good and so distributing it in service dividends to those who produce it.

“Thus each would be compensated for his exclusion from sites to which he has the right of access, but from which he is excluded by the fact that others monopolize them. This substitutes a legal, financial equality for the physical equality which is of course impossible, since under no conceivable circumstances could we all occupy the same site.

“There, in about five hundred words, is the frame-work of the science of economics. Every step provable.

“The followers of Henry George, “The Prophet of San Francisco”, are the only people who offer the world a scientific solution of civic, political and industrial problems.

“We are the only people proposing a system that is consistent throughout; that benefits none at the expense of others; that separates the problems of civics, politics and of industry from those of human conduct; that solves economic problems without waiting to make men good and by first establishing wholesome conditions makes it easy to be good.

“Here is the proof that exploitation would be impossible under the Georgist system and that no one need fear how much money another might accumulate.

“1. No man can get wages on another man's labor,—he may get another man wages, but he cannot get it as wages.

“2. No man can get interest on another man's capital,—he may get it, but not as interest.

“3. The only other way known to economics whereby one may get wealth is to get it as rent; but under the Georgist system, no man would get a cent of rent.

“4. It follows that, under the Georgist system, the private appropriation of rent being prevented, it becomes impossible for one man to exploit another; because no one could then obtain wealth except if he got as wages or interest,—that is by his own exertion and as his own proper reward.

"As all the wages and interest would be in our private pockets and all the rent would be in our public pocket (the public treasury), we would then have the entire value of our out-put, no matter how great it might be, and could buy it all and pay cash for it.

"There would then be no lack of buying power; slow business would be unknown. **Business would always be good.**

"There would then be no need to advertise, except to announce new products. Our bedlam of advertising would be ended; an attempt to make a sale would be considered bad manners. The honored profession of journalism would be revived, newspapers would displace our adpapers and editors would displace our aditors; and the radio of our dreams would displace the raucous adio that now violates the sanctity of our homes. Truth and Culture would reign supreme!

"As all normal men could then make an honest living, quackery, shysterism, churchianity (in contrast with true Christianity), food adulteration, misrepresentation of wares, etc., would pass away as so many bad dreams; for even the basest love of approbation would then be sufficient to keep men in the straight and narrow path of honest dealing,—especially as every one would then have the fullest opportunity to find his proper work in life and to prepare for it.

"As industry would then be so humanized that deaths by accident would be few, and as there would be no wars to destroy men, the numerical equality of the sexes would be better preserved and it would be possible for very woman to have the opportunity of presiding over a home,—a real home, for there would be no need for women to go out to work and women could confine themselves to home-making. Divorce would rarely occur.

"The financial security of both sexes and the stabilization of marriage upon a love basis would settle both the red light and the white slave problems.

"Men would be better mated, their children would be better born and better reared; home life would be all that Love and unlimited opportunity can make it.

"As every man could then have a competence, the lure of gambling, either with cards or on the market, as a means of "making a stake" would lose its present attraction.

"As men and women would then have more to live for and fewer troubles to drown in liquor or deaden with narcotics, the liquor and narcotic evils would die out.

"As each race would then have the fullest opportunity at home in its own native environment, there would be no temptation for any of them to force themselves upon other races. This would settle the race issue.

"As rent, the prize for which propagandists now compete would no longer be obtainable, vested interests would not be tempted to prostitute the schools, the colleges or the universities and these would become, at last, what it was intended and supposed they would be; namely, **educational institutions.**

"Schools would be lavishly financed; teachers would be real teachers, well paid and free to teach the truth.

"Because it would then be possible **"to mix religion with business", churches** would be well supported so that preachers could be real religious leaders and preach the truth without fear of embarrassing the finance committee.

"As exploitation would be impossible, there would be no need for commissions to regulate this and regulate that; our governmental machinery could be greatly simplified and government would keep out of business.

"Because exploitation would be impossible, there would be nothing to be gained by interfering with the freedom of the press, or the freedom of speech, or the freedom of assembly. We would then have real freedom in all these matters.

"Land is the only thing raised in price by conditions that alter the flow of trade to the advantage of favored locations. Those who collect the rent on that new land value are, therefore, the only ones to profit permanently from war.

"Collecting the rent in lieu of taxes would make it impossible to secure a private financial advantage from war. It would force even the most powerful interests to concern themselves, not with rent, but with the safety of the wages and interest funds. Hence war propaganda would give way to propaganda in behalf of permanent, world-wide peace.

"As there would be no taxpayers, there would be no one to object to improvement programs; and as the business men would want the business and Labor would want the jobs, every one would want every possible improvement as quickly as possible. As no one could get the rent, no matter where the improvements might be made, there would be no sectional jealousies to block these improvement programs.

"We would, of course, continue to pay for our public service and betterments in our rent; but as that rent (ground is meant, always), would go into the public treasury, we would not pay those bills again in taxes, as we do now.

"As these improvements would make the locality a better place to live and to do business they would raise rent and in that way increase the public revenues and so would finance more improvements to raise more rent to provide the revenue to finance more improvements.

"Politics would then be clean, wholesome and respectable; and the term politician would indicate a citizen who makes his citizenship a profession; and civic, political and industrial problems would be settled scientifically instead of being left to the play of prejudice.

"Truth, Progress and Culture would come into their own.

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