

proprietary "economic principles of society," and to replace them by principles based on that equality of natural opportunity among men necessary to work out the social salvation of the people. What is the use of discussing these questions from a mere academic point of view. Justice and expediency demand that action be taken. "The deaths always exceeded the births in the uninhabitable house districts," said Dr. Russell at the Congress, and straight-way he began to lecture the owners of these properties on their duties, and proposed "to shut up their uninhabitable houses until they were made habitable." "There were many schemes," he said in his peroration, "for social restitution at present. The oldest was to be found in the Bible, and was based upon righteousness—not righteousness in the air or in the earth, but in the individual." Well the Bible has been appealing to men down through the ages to act justly, and "Do unto others as ye would that they would do unto you," is the newer Gospel that has overshadowed the christian world these nine-hundred years. But in vain. The people have been despoiled of their "natural inheritance," and there can be no "righteousness in the individual," nor peace, nor health, nor rest to society, until the people have the freedom to use this God-given inheritance of theirs to work out their social salvation.

HERBERT SPENCER'S RECATANTION.

THE "PERPLEXED PHILOSOPHER" AND THE ENGLISH LAND RESTORATION LEAGUE.

In 1851 Mr. Herbert Spencer produced his "Social Statics," in which he questioned the equity of private property in land. Henry George in "Progress and Poverty" quoted from this work one or two of the more telling arguments in favour of common land ownerships, and Spencer at once sprung into fame as a land restorer. His aristocratic friends thereupon asked him to explain. He did so, and the explanation is one of the saddest and most humiliating things in English literature. Henry George replied to this in his book, "A Perplexed Philosopher." The answer has yet to come, though rumour says it is coming. Meantime the subject has been opened up once more in a letter by Mr. Spencer to a Mr. D. O'Brien, which appeared in the *St. James Gazette*, 20th August. Ten years ago the English Land Restoration League, like Mr. George, taking Mr. Spencer to be in earnest, and thinking to enlist him an advocate in the cause of land restoration, published in leaflet form one of the chapters in "Social Statics"—"The Right to the Use of the Earth." Mr. O'Brien has forwarded a copy of the leaflet to Mr. Spencer, and in reply he, Mr. S., charges the League with "deliberately suppressing" the passage in which he says—"Most of our present landowners are men who have either mediately or immediately—either by their own acts, or by the acts of their ancestors—given for their estates equivalents of honestly earned wealth, believing that they were investing their savings in a legitimate manner. To justly estimate and liquidate the claims of such is one of the most intricate problems society will one day have to solve." "The leaflet, too," he complains, "implies that I at present advocate direct ownerships of the land by the community, whereas, it is perfectly well known that I have in a considerable measure changed my opinion."

Mr. F. Verrinder, Secretary of the English Land Restoration League, has replied in the columns of the *London Daily Chronicle*, as follows:—

"The fact is, Mr. Spencer's own quotation from his own book is 'garbled.' Let me help him to a fuller statement of his own views:—

"But unfortunately, most of our present landowners are men who have, either mediately or immediately—either by their own acts or by

the acts of their ancestors—given for their estates equivalents of honestly-earned wealth, believing that they were investing their savings in a legitimate manner. To justly estimate and liquidate the claims of such is one of the most intricate problems society will one day have to solve. *But with this perplexity and our extrication from it abstract morality has no concern. Men having got themselves into the dilemma by disobedience to the law must get out of it as well as they can, and with as little injury to the landed class as may be.*

*'Meanwhile, we shall do well to recollect that there are others besides the landed class to be considered. In our tender regard for the vested interests of the few, let us remember that the rights of the many are in abeyance; and must remain so as long as the earth is monopolised by individuals. Let us remember, too, that the injustice thus inflicted on the mass of mankind is an injustice of the gravest nature. To deprive others of their rights to the use of the earth is to commit a crime inferior only in wickedness to the crime of taking away their lives or personal liberties.'*

Now, it was precisely with the 'abstract morality' of land nationalization from the Individualist point of view as expounded by its eloquent apostle, and not with methods, that our leaflet had to do, and consequently the argument had, on Mr. Spencer's own showing, 'no concern' with the perplexities of his compensation scheme. Unfortunately for Mr. Spencer's present position, and for his friends in the Liberty and Property Defence League—"Sir John and his Grace"—with whom he now agrees that 'it would be better that the existing system' with all its iniquities 'should continue,' many thousands have been convinced by his arguments who cannot follow him in his repudiation of them. They still believe, as he once did, that 'either men have a right to make the soil private property or they have not.

If they have such a right, then there is truth in that tenet of the ultra-Tory school—represented by the Liberty and Property Defence League—"that the landowners are the only legitimate rulers of a country; that the people at large remain in it only by the landowners' permission, and ought, consequently, to submit to the landowners' rule, and respect whatever institutions the landowners set up. *There is no escape from these inferences.*"

In his recantation, Mr. Spencer further says, "nationalisation of the land effected after compensation, . . . amounting to the greater part of its value would entail in the shape of interest on the required purchase money, as great a sum as is now paid on rent. . . . Add to which there is no reason to think that the substituted form of administration would be better than the existing form of administration." Commenting on these pious opinions as a substitute for the arguments contained in "Social Statics," Henry George in his reply to Mr. Spencer's "A Perplexed Philosopher," compares them with one of his, Mr. Spencer's, favourite methods of illustration:—"I am told," said the respectable grandmother, with a big stick in her hand, "that you are the boy who broke down my fence and told the other boys that they were at liberty to go in to my orchard and take my apples." "It is not true," replied the trembling small boy, "I didn't do it. And when I did it I was only trying to mend your fence which I found was weak. And the reason I did it was to keep bad boys out. And I have always said you ought to be paid for your apples. And I won't do it again! And I am certain your apples would give boys the stomach-ache."

In a letter to a Glasgow correspondent which appeared in the  *Herald*  the other day, Mr. Spencer charges land restorers with perverting his views. Mr. Henry George charges Mr. Spencer, in "A Perplexed Philosopher," with misstating, in his recantation, what he had previously said in "Social Statics." A more serious charge, and, which if true must lead the enquirer into confusion. Let him answer Mr. George.

A labourer turns a desert into a garden, and then we increase his taxes. The speculator turns a garden into a desert, and then we diminish his taxes. Verily, we are a great people.

FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE LAND QUESTION.

Mr. Louis F. Post, one of the foremost workers in the Single Tax movement in the United States, in an American magazine, the *Arena*, thus summarises what Single Taxmen regard as the first principles of the Land Question:—

First—Man produces all that man consumes. Second in order of statement, though equal in importance and concurrent in time—To produce and consume man must have the use of appropriate natural objects external to himself, all of which objects are included in the term "land." Denied the use of all land, man cannot live even the life of an animal. Denied the use of land within the limits of civilization, he cannot live the life of a civilized man. And to the extent that he is denied the use of land, to that extent his ability to produce and consume is limited.

Third—Legal ownership of the land by some men interferes with its use by other men, and by enabling the former to derive an advantage from what by nature is common to all, makes men unequal in respect of their rights before the law. The one extreme of this inequality is the establishment of differences of income, due, not to different services, but to different legal rights as to the use of the earth. The other extreme is the enslavement by landowners of all other men.

Fourth—To restore equality of legal rights the value of land must be taken for public use, then the prosperity of men would be determined by the service they render to others, and no longer by the privilege they enjoy of appropriating the value of superior land.

Finally—This involves no formal revolution. To take land values for public use requires no greater change than the abolition of all taxes save the Single Tax upon landowners in proportion to the value of their land regardless of improvements. To adopt this simple remedy would be to apply to public use approximately the full value of land, to make the mere ownership of land unprofitable, to remove all incentive to hold it for any other purpose than its best use, and, while lowering rent, to increase wages, make hard times impossible, and banish poverty and the fear of poverty.

We earnestly advise all who have not thoroughly "grasped" this truth on the Land Question to study carefully this epitome of first principles as presented by Mr. Post.

Single Tax Items.

THEN AND NOW.—Said Lord Salisbury in the debate on the Evicted Tenant's Bill—"The landlord used to be regarded as a human being, but he was now assuming the position of the Jew of the middle ages."

From a contemporary we learn that the Duchess of Devonshire recently ordered the Secretary of the Eastbourne Golf Club that she desired the clubhouse opened on a particular Sunday for a dual party to disport themselves with the caddies. The Secretary at once informed her that the premises were closed on Sundays, but the Duchess promptly replied that the Golf Ground was the Duke's property and only by favour lent the club. Needless to say the fifth commandment kicked the beam and the Golf Club was opened. And "these be your gods, oh, Israel."

The cost of draining the Zuyder Zee and reclaiming 450,000 acres is estimated to be not less than £25,200,000, including measures of defence and compensation to the Zee fishermen. But the value of the land reclaimed is put up at £26,100,000.

The Highland Railway Company have agreed to purchase the estate of Millburn for extensions at Inverness Station. The price, it is believed, is £13,000.

The Exchange Telegraph Company states that the London County Council propose to accept the offer of the Duchy of Lancaster to sell land for the purpose of widening the Strand and Wellington Street, at a cost of £32,000.