

A Poem of Political Economy

from *Grip*, mid-1887

likely by J. W. Bengough

Capital, Land and Labor
Were triplets at their birth,
And started out together
To cultivate the earth;

Quoth they, "We'll work together,
And all the WEALTH we make
Will be divided fairly,
And each a third will take.

"Capital's share is *Interest*,
Land's share we'll know as *Rent*,
While Labor's we'll call *Wages*.
And each will be content."

The business grew and prospered,
And wealth was made galore,
But, lo! while LAND waxed wealthy
The other two grew poor.

And it was seen, most strangely,
That with the rise of *Rent*,
Both *Interest* and *Wages*
Lower and lower went!

"There's something wrong, dear brother."
The others said to Land,
"There's something crooked somewhere
We'd like to understand.

"While you are fat and jolly,
And from all care are free.
We, though we do our portion
Are pressed by poverty."

Said Land, "My dearest brothers,
The facts are as you state—
While *capital* and *wages* fall
Rent grows at inverse rate.

"And why? — the thing is simple,
And very plain to see: —
For all your raw material
You've got to come to me.

"And I (through 'private ownership')
Am thus empowered to say,
As much as I see fit to ask
You both have got to pay.

"We're on a different footing,
As you may now perceive,
You've got to have *my* help, you know,
Or, simply, you can't live.

"And since (through 'private ownership')
I ask more than my share,
It follows that my partners
Are left a little bare!"

"Most excellently reasoned,"
Said Labor. "clear as day!"
"The very thing," said Capital,
"That I was going to say."

"Well, now," said Labor thoughtfully,
"I think I see the chip
That spoils our dish of porridge—
It's 'private ownership.'

"We'll just dissolve this little firm
And form again with two
Called Capital & Labor —
Both workers — that will do.

"And Land (or raw material)
Since it by Heaven is sent
We'll treat as common property
By wiping out all rent.

"Then while the wealth producing
Will go on as before,
The workers will enjoy it,
And neither will be poor."

Restitution

J. W. Bengough

Note: This is the final page of The Up-To-Date Primer: A First Book of Lessons for Little Political Economists In Words of One Syllable, With Pictures (1896) is a series of 70 one-page lessons, each with a cartoon woodcut illustration, of Henry George's ideas, in Progress and Poverty. (The rest of this witty book is almost entirely in single-syllable words.)

Enough! the lie is ended. God only owns the land;
No parchment deed hath virtue unsigned by His own hand;
Out on the bold blasphemers who would eject the Lord,
And pauperize His children, and trample on His word!

Behold this glorious temple, with dome of starry sky,
And floor of greensward scented, and trees for pillars high;
And song of birds for music, and bleat of lambs for prayer,
And incense of sweet vapors uprising everywhere.

Behold his table bounteous spread over land and sea,
The sure reward of labor, to every mortal free;
And hark! through Nature's anthem there rises the refrain,
"God owns the world, but giveth it unto the sons of men."

But see, within the temple, as in Solomon's of old,
The money-changers haggle, and souls are bought and sold;
And that is called an *owner's* which can only be the Lord's,
And Christ is not remembered – nor His whip of knotted cords.

But Christ has not forgotten, and wolfish human greed
Shall be driven from our heritage; God's bounties shall be freed;
And from out our hoary statutes shall be torn the crime-stained leaves,
Which have turned the world, God's Temple, into a den of thieves!

Online at <https://archive.org/details/uptodateprimerfi00beng>