

Just Published.

New Edition.

THE CONDITION OF LABOUR

By Henry George

The Henry George Foundation of Great Britain begins the sixth year of its existence with a new edition of *The Condition of Labour*, Henry George's masterly analysis of the rights of property written as "An Open Letter to Pope Leo XIII." This book brings the total publications of the Foundation (since 1929) to date to 96,000 Books by Henry George, 46,800 of his *Lectures and Addresses*, and 50,000 Pamphlets by other authors.

The new *Condition of Labour* is published in red cloth at 1s. and in maroon rexine at 2s. How the book came to be written is explained in the new Introduction which this edition contains and we reprint here this Introduction not only for its own interest but because it provides all the recommendation necessary to procure the book without delay and persuade others to read it.

INTRODUCTION

The Condition of Labour was written and first published in 1891 in reply to an Encyclical Letter, entitled *Rerum Novarum*, which had been issued by Pope Leo XIII in May of that year, and which dealt with the condition of labouring people throughout the world.

Henry George felt that the Encyclical, although it did not mention his name or his specific proposal of the taxation of land values, would be interpreted as an attack upon his teachings. He therefore thought it necessary to undertake a reply to a document of such widespread importance and to show that his postulates were all "stated or implied in the Encyclical" and were "the primary perceptions of human reason, the fundamental teachings of the Christian faith."

His book takes the form of an "open letter" to the Pope. In it he gives full credit to the sincerity of intention revealed in the Encyclical and to the spirit which prompted it. He claims that the doctrines advanced by himself and his followers merit the unqualified approval of the Pope, instead of the condemnation which appeared to him to be implied in the Encyclical. He, therefore, asks permission to lay before His Holiness a more thorough explanation of those doctrines, and to set forth some considerations which appeared to have been overlooked.

The Pope's apprehension that the masses, faced with intolerable conditions of life, might be incited to blind revolutionary upheaval, furnished an additional justification to George for a reply, and gave him an opportunity to show that the only way to avert this danger is to make plain the underlying cause of economic misery and its cure, and so to dispel the general ignorance which renders possible such a catastrophe.

Thus, while politicians all over the world are tinkering with effects, *The Condition of Labour*, like the author's supreme work, *Progress and Poverty*, goes straight to the source of social evils, showing the futility of lopping branches while leaving the root of those evils untouched.

The book is on a high plane. Its statements are clear, its logic convincing. Socialism, Communism, Anarchism, Trade Unionism and State regulation of industrial conditions pass under review. The author then clearly sets out and explains what is in his opinion the only adequate remedy and shows how it may be applied. The work is a masterly exposition of the moral significance of the fundamental reform for which he stood. It proves the wisdom and practicability of applying the principles of Christianity to present-day affairs.

In 1881, ten years before the publication of the Encyclical, the Right Rev. Dr Thomas Nulty, Bishop of Meath, Ireland, had issued to the clergy and laity of his diocese an Essay on the Land Question (which came to be known as "Back to the Land") in which he expressed views identical with those of Henry George, and in particular advocated the taking of economic rent for public revenue. Henry George subsequently made the acquaintance of Bishop Nulty and published an American edition of the Essay, to which he appended a note that it "was written by Dr Nulty before he had read *Progress and Poverty*, or perhaps ever heard of me."

In 1882 the Rev. Dr Edward McGlynn, parish priest of

St. Stephen's Church, New York, and one of the most influential Catholic clergymen in the United States, definitely allied himself with Henry George and with Michael Davitt and the Irish Land League. In 1886 he was warned by Archbishop Corrigan to leave aside anything which would seem to "coincide with Socialism" and to have no further "relations with Henry George." In spite of an injunction not to take part in political meetings he appeared on a public platform in support of Henry George's candidature for the mayoralty of New York, and was temporarily suspended from duty. Nevertheless, driven by a burning sincerity and compassion for the oppressed, Father McGlynn continued the public advocacy of his views on the land question, regardless of the serious personal consequences to himself. In 1887 he was removed from his pastorate and on 3rd July, 1887, he was excommunicated, the formal reason being disobedience to his ecclesiastical superiors.

In the autumn of 1891 *The Condition of Labour* was published simultaneously in London and New York. At the same time a translation into Italian by Ludovico Eusebio was published in Turin and Rome, and a copy of this translation, beautifully printed and handsomely bound, was presented to Pope Leo XIII personally by Monsignor Caprini, prefect of the Vatican Library.

In 1892 Archbishop (afterwards Cardinal) Satolli visited America as Papal Ablegate to the Church in the United States, and made it known that he had been instructed to inquire into the McGlynn case. Dr Richard L. Burtzell, an eminent ecclesiastical jurist, presented to Monsignor Satolli an exposition of Dr McGlynn's beliefs on the land question. Subsequently Father McGlynn himself drew up a statement of his teaching and submitted it to Monsignor Satolli, who directed it to be examined by a Committee of four of the Professors of the Catholic University of Washington,* who declared it "to contain nothing contrary to Catholic teachings." On 23rd December, 1892, the Papal Ablegate announced from Washington that Dr McGlynn was declared free from ecclesiastical censures and restored to the exercise of his priestly functions. Three weeks later Monsignor Satolli drew up a lengthy statement reviewing the case in which he declared that "Dr McGlynn had presented a brief statement of his opinions on moral economic matters and it was judged not contrary to the doctrine constantly taught by the Church, and as recently confirmed by the Holy Father in the Encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*."

"From henceforth," to quote Henry George himself, "the Encyclical on the Condition of Labour . . . is evidently to be understood not as disapproving the 'single tax,' but as disapproving the grotesque misrepresentations of it that were evidently at first presented to the Pope."

The official translation of the Encyclical Letter of Pope Leo XIII is, as in previous editions, reprinted in its entirety, so that the reader may have access to the context of all the passages referred to by Henry George.

Three new appendices have been added to this edition. One containing extracts from the Encyclical of Pope Pius XI, "On Reconstructing the Social Order," one of the purposes of which was to "develop more fully" some of the points contained in the Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII. The other two contain Dr McGlynn's doctrinal statement as presented to Monsignor Satolli and the principal part of Bishop Nulty's Essay. These are published in view both of their historical importance and of their intrinsic value as clear and unequivocal statements of the principles of Henry George.

The text of Henry George's "Open Letter" has been carefully collated with the text of the American Memorial Edition, a table of contents has been provided, and the work has been furnished with an index. It is hoped, therefore, that this edition will be found even more useful and worthy of the author than those which have preceded it, and serve to direct serious-minded men to the way in which the natural and just distribution of wealth may be secured, and the dangers threatening our civilization be averted.

* The four Professors were: The Rev. Dr Thomas Bouquillon, the Dean of the Theological Faculty; The Rev. Dr Thomas O'Gorman, afterwards Bishop of Sioux Falls; The Rev. Dr Thomas J. Shahan, the late head of the Catholic University; and The Rev. Dr Charles Grannan.