

Not for such as he the comforts and luxuries of existence. He trod the rough way of all great solitary reformers, but he had the love of many, certainly of all those who knew him best. And that is enough.

Death of Dr. Louis H. Davis

THE passing of Louis H. Davis, of St. Louis, Mo. is a great loss to the cause. Long a friend and contributor to LAND AND FREEDOM, he was active in all Single Tax work. Harlan Eugene Read and Charles Lischer spoke at the services. Dr. Davis was 67 years old.

The Single Tax League of Missouri passed the following resolutions:

"The League which stands for the right of all to the use of the Earth by taking the land values that all make for the benefit of all, thereby abolishing the primary cause of unemployment and poverty, has sustained a great loss in the death of our

DR. LOUIS H. DAVIS

We regret his leaving us. As Henry George said: "Strong soul and high endeavor the World needs them now." He kept the faith, gave himself and his means to the cause that will restore to man his birthright in the Earth.

"Ideals are like stars, We cannot touch them with our hands, but, like the Seafaring man upon the waste of the waters can choose them for our guide, and having choosen and following them they will lead us to our destiny."—CARL SCHURZ.

With this slight testimonial we wish to extend to his family our sincere sympathy in the loss of so worthy a husband and father."

Reviews of Louis Post's Prophet of San Francisco

AMONG the reviews of Louis Post's book recently published by the Vanguard Press of this city, is one by Alice Stone Blackwell in *Unity* edited by Rev. John Haynes Holmes. The reviewer says:

There is such a wealth of material in this book that it is hard even to outline its contents. The author tells of Henry George from many sides—his family-life, his spiritual vision, his chief works, his views on many subjects, including the future of his cause, which the author says is steadily though quietly gaining converts. There is a list of the men who advocate like ideas, before and since, and answers to the principal objections; a description of Henry George's chief works; and an account of the *Standard* and of the *Public*, which Mr. Post edited so ably for many years. It would be interesting to quote the explanation of the kind of Socialism that Henry George believed in and the kind he did not; his reasons for thinking permanent organization for the promotion of a political reform to be generally unwise; his argument for the immortality of human beings and of animals; and his opinions on many other subjects, including the right re-

lations between husband and wife. Henry George married at twenty-two a girl of eighteen, who was all his life, he declared, his best adviser. The present volume has been brought out under the intelligent and affectionate supervision of Alice Thatcher Post, who was so sympathetically associated with her husband for years in Single Tax work and in the editorship of the *Public*. The book is a treasury of interesting and inspiring material.

A review from Prof. Paul H. Douglass appears in the *New Republic* of the issue of December 10. Mr. Douglass deprecates what he calls "the monotonous monomania" of Single Taxers, and he says "we have been largely a nation of real estate speculators and have, therefore, been reluctant to admit that increased rent which we expected to make us rich should be taken by the community." He adds however:

But neither intellectual fastidiousness nor economic interest should blind us to the robust central truth that the economic rent of bare land is a social product and should normally furnish a larger part than it now does of the revenues of society. It has been the supreme merit of Henry George that he pointed this out with extraordinary and genuine eloquence, even if not always with impeccable logic. Ricardo had, to be sure, laid the basis for such a social theory when he worked out the nature of rent by showing that it was the difference between the costs of cultivation on the better grades of land and those on the poorest pieces which were utilized. As population increases, the pressure upon the soil becomes greater; poorer and poorer lands would be resorted to and with the increase in the differential, rents and, therefore, the value of land would inevitably rise. It would have been only a logical extension of Ricardo's analysis to have concluded then and there that since rent was not a social cost of production and was, instead, a socially created surplus, the community should mark it as its very own. But this ethical application was not made by Ricardo or by any of his followers with the exception of John Stuart Mill.

We can afford to overlook the charge of "failing in impeccable logic" which the Professor brings against Henry George. It was but natural that George should have fallen into many errors." These the reviewer with commendable caution fails to indicate. It is a memory of many now living that certain very eminent gentlemen came to grief in trying to point out these "errors" and lapses of logic in Henry George's contentions. But Prof. Douglass is very fair in this review, and makes admissions enough to justify the taking, if not the whole, then a good part of this "socially created surplus," i. e., economic rent.

In a review of Mr. Post's book in the *New Church Messenger* signed by B. A. Whittemore we find the following clear cut statement.:

The value of land in general being due to location on the one hand and to demand for occupancy on the other (an acre in the heart of the Sahara Desert, for instance, being worth nothing, but in the heart of Manhattan being worth a fortune—a value created not by any individual but solely by the entire community), the programme is, to take for community uses by taxation the rent that title ownership now enables the owner to exact from the user

for use of the land itself. Let title ownership to land remain as at present to begin with; but let the advantages of holding such title to land except by the actual user be taken away by taxation of the location to the extent of the amount of money the highest competitor for that location is willing to pay for occupancy and use. If land were taxed on that basis, speculation in land would become practically impossible, and everybody who cared to do so could occupy land somewhere, on the basis of paying the land-value taxation to the community in which located. Free land was one of the great inducements to immigration to this country. Alas, that in giving free occupancy the government did not see the unwisdom of giving property ownership! But after all, our government was not especially at fault, as the holding of land as property of individuals goes back throughout past history, and most (if not all) titles go back eventually to conquest and the assumption of ownership by the conquerors,—titles thus beginning with force and iniquity, later bulwarked and buttressed by human law in the interests of the holding class.

"The Prophet of San Francisco,"—Mr. Post has given to his book the title that the Duke of Argyll applied to Henry George in ridicule, when his doctrine of the taxation of land values first became known in Great Britain. Though first applied in ridicule, the appellation seems a most fitting one, as Henry George manifested the true spirit of the prophet in devoting his life to the promulgation of the message the Lord had given him for the advancement of His kingdom upon earth. That many persons sensed the prophetic element in his function was especially manifest by the burst of applause when, during the funeral service, on November 1, 1897, Father McGlynn in his eulogy said at the climax of his remarks:

We can say of him as the Scriptures say, there was a man sent of God whose name was John; and I believe that I mock not those sacred Scriptures when I say, there was a man sent of God whose name was Henry George. (P. 185.) -

ACCORDING to *Progress*, Melbourne Single Tax organ, Australia, Java, a little island about as large as England, supports a population of 37,400,000, and has no unemployment menace. How do they do it? High tariff? Prohibition? Gold standard? Private operation of public utilities? Not a bit of it. "Land speculation is forbidden. Land is treated as government property and is let on hereditary lease or in communal holdings."

THE Single Tax is aimed directly against occupation by decree. It is a practical means of nullifying the advantages, absolutely extra-economic in character, which accrue to the beneficiaries of the political pre-emption of natural resources. It is a scientifically perfect pry by which the dead hand of predatory exploitation must be forced to relinquish its grip on land, and by which the wage-working class, without a single auxiliary statutory device being necessary, will be set free.

—MURRAY GODWIN in the *New Freeman*

The Taxation of Land Values

PRIZE WINNING ESSAY, 1930 CONTEST

By R. C. WIGHT, University of Va.

THERE is little, if anything, that an ordinary layman could conceive of in the way of praise to Henry George that has not been said whole heartedly by the leaders of our civilization in all walks of life. Yet for some indefinable reason he has not been accorded the universal preeminence in the instruction of students which he deserves in the estimation of such men as John Dewey, Irving Fisher, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and numerous others. Perhaps it is because the practical or material side of his work has tended to obscure his greater study of ideals of mankind from the vision of the ordinary student. Or it may be that America in her wild enthusiasm over material progress is slow to recognize great social philosophers in her midst; or more probably that Henry George thought mostly apart from the majority of students of social theory. The fact remains that as a thinker he justly deserves a place among the few greatest.

The problem dealt with here is one which is essentially ideal; yet it is so clear and of so great moment that it must be made very real and tangible, else it will remain forever a stumbling block to the insatiable hunger of man for a better quality in each aspect of life. We have the land and all that comes from it as an eternal endowment of nature; we likewise are capable of expending much more physical labor than is necessary; our accumulation of capital has kept pace with the growth in other ways; many of us have infinitely more than is necessary to satisfy our material wants. In the face of this there are millions who starve for want of the barest essentials, and hence cannot apply themselves to the higher developments of life. With an over-production at all times in some products, millions ready to produce more and a great demand for the primary wants of mankind, there is surely something very wrong with the balance of man's spiritual, intellectual, and physical life. It has remained to the present an enigma sufficiently baffling to thwart the first move toward a solution. It is this fact that has kept it in the realm of the ideal, but there is apparently no reason to believe that there isn't definite means of correcting this maladjustment. And the means of solving the enigma must be within the province of political economy. The problem presents first the discovery and interpretation of the law associating poverty with progress.

Animal and vegetable life tend to exhaust the resources of nature, but with human life this is not the case. It is a peculiar and perhaps the greatest prerogative of man that his desires and capability of desires are dynamic and infinite. The wants of all other life are fixed, but those of man evolve with his nature. To a certain point the two seek the same ends; namely, the acquisition of a sufficient quantity of objects for sustenance and the maxi-