

## THE APPEAL TO REASON

By E. J. Craigie, M.P.

THERE ARE many people who believe that only where we find the equal and harmonious development of the head, the heart, and the hand, the sense of proportion and order, the love of beauty, the hunger for righteousness, and the creative impulse; only when these are discovered together in a state of high development and in their natural proportions, are we in the presence of genius of the truest form.

In this sense we regard Henry George as one of the greatest geniuses the English-speaking peoples produced during the nineteenth century. Just because of his singular sanity, however, it may be difficult to hazard an opinion as to whether the man or his great book, *Progress and Poverty*, has been the greater influence in moulding the thoughts of the present generation, and in directing the social movements of the time. His appeal has been in equal proportions to all the many sides of the human mind. It is to this many-sidedness of his character, to his perfect sanity, and the universality of his appeal, that we base his claim to be regarded as a genius of the purest form.

Who that has come under the mysterious influence of *Progress and Poverty* has not felt beneath the closely-reasoned argument and inexorable logic, the fervid spirit of the man rebelling against the dismal prevailing theories in economics, and striving at a white heat of passion, "that to the height of the great argument, he may assert Eternal Providence and justify the ways of God to man?"

The Science of Political Economy in the hands of Henry George is not (like that of the chemist or physicist) one of which the subject matter is composed of insensate atoms, but of living, palpitating, human souls, towards which his spirit goes out with passionate affection.

Through all the close reasoning and abundant illustration which fills the book, one feels the heart-beats of the strong man, striving to clear natural law from the odium of responsibility for the suffering and poverty he sees around, and to defend much-maligned human nature from the charge it had hitherto lain under of being, by its innate corruptness, the author and producer of its own misery. Even had the logic of *Progress and Poverty* been discredited by the passing of years, the moral force of the author would have served to preserve it as a book which has given a new direction to the aspirations and enthusiasm of his fellowmen.

*Progress and Poverty*, then, we describe as the work of a genius. Like all works of real genius, it consists in the discovery of a simple principle. What is this simple principle? It is, that, as there is a right and a wrong way of doing all things, so there is a right and a wrong way of collecting public revenue; that the wrong way results in creating an artificial centre of economic gravity, which produces the most violent contrasts of monstrous wealth and frightful poverty, while the right way tends towards a natural distribution of wealth in exact proportion to the contribution each has made to its production.

Henry George has shown the world that the line which divides the right from the wrong way of collecting public revenue is a very narrow one, indeed. On the one side is the present method of taxing industry and the products of industry; of penalizing him who uses the raw materials of the earth wisely and well, and of leaving untaxed him who fences in a portion of the earth and will neither use it himself nor allow

others to do so. On the other side is the method of adopting, as the sole standard of contribution to the public revenue the economic value of that portion of the earth which one man occupies to the exclusion of all the rest of the race.

Was ever so simple a remedy offered to a sick world? Cease imposing taxation on anything that is the result of human effort, and collect your public revenue by taking the only element of value that remains, i.e., *the rent of land*—then expect to see poverty disappear and an equitable distribution of wealth established. Such in brief is the message of him in whom the force of a powerful intellect was joined to fervid passions.

## THE NATURAL PLAN

By Clyde W. Silvernale

"A man who limits his observation of life to the sphere in which there is no freedom—to the sphere of effects—does not live a true life. He only lives a true life who has transferred his life to the sphere in which freedom lies—into the domain of first causes." So said Leo Tolstoy in *The Kingdom of God is Within You*.

The domain of first causes, sources, the people and the earth, just you and the land—in nature there simply isn't anything else. That is what Henry George saw so clearly; that is what Henry George based all of his writings on.

How easy it is for anyone to observe effects and foster plans to deal with them, though all such activities merely conceal that which should remain exposed.

To trace effects back to first causes and deal with those causes, to analyze the maladjustments to be found at sources and formulate a scientific remedy, a remedy based on natural law, was the work and result of the life of Henry George.

Henry George saw that a natural relationship between the people as a whole and the land must be established, in order to eliminate injustice and parasitism. He saw that speculation in and capitalization of land and the taxation of production, exchange and consumption of the people produced the ill effects so evident in his time. Are they not even more evident in our time? Progress has deepened the poverty it should have abolished.

Henry George's great bequest to mankind was his clear explanation of the natural plan to return to natural order by abolishing all taxes on production, exchange and consumption, and collecting natural ground rent into public treasuries.

Injustice, poverty, parasitism and wars are inevitable until this proposal is adopted. In the meantime unnatural and arbitrary political systems such as Communism, Fascism and Naziism will be attempted with years of turmoil and oppression. Are not most of the nations in the midst of it at this very moment?

Henry George's life was spent in the sphere in which freedom lies—in the domain of first causes. Henry George lived a true life.

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