

OUR DAILY BREAD—Address by Dr. Viggo Starcke

THE core of Socratic wisdom is very simple. It is only this: to know your own ignorance. I wish that all statesmen understood that. I do not forget it, even if I am not a Socrates. But I am so ignorant that I did not even know when I left Denmark a few days ago that I was going to open this discussion. Therefore, please excuse me, if my talk does not cover the whole subject.

We know that feelings in man are much older than human thought, and geological periods older still. Religion is very old, much older than science, and is deeply rooted in human feelings and instincts. Human thought is only a few thousand years old.

Our hope for material progress is based upon the further evolution of thought, science and technique; but our hope for social progress in happiness and dignity is based upon our feelings of right and wrong.

The great, important and fundamental questions in life are all very simple. Everybody can understand them. The details of those matters are often difficult and complicated. But in my opinion great questions are greater than small questions. Most people cannot see that. They are so absorbed in the details of small things that they do not see the great things. Even the shrewd Italian statesman, Machiavelli, understood that. He said: People are always provoked by small injustices, but never by great injustices.

Therefore, if we Georgeists have to speak to common people about great and eternal things, it is very important to make quite clear what we mean by the words: right and wrong, justice and injustice, righteousness, love and charity.

Let me illustrate it in a simple and, perhaps, childish way.

If I have a working-place, some land to work upon, and if I plough the land, sow the seed, harvest the crop, grind the flour and bake the bread—my daily bread—then there is a voice inside saying: *My bread is Mine!* And if you also have a working place where you earn your daily bread, you also say: *My bread is Mine!*

We all feel that is right. "My bread is Mine"—that is the beginning of justice. But it is a narrow and limited justice if I am interested only in my own bread and my own right. It is the righteousness of the Pharisees. And if our righteousness is not greater than the Pharisees', we shall never reach that form of human living for which we are created.

If I want the right of a working-place and the right to the bread I have produced, there is a voice inside me saying—if I only will listen to it: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Then I will not only say: *My bread is Mine!* but also: *Your bread is Yours!* Then justice is filled with a warm and human feeling and is extended to something new. *Your bread is Yours!*

This is Love.

There is no greater love in the world than this—to give other people the same right, freedom and opportunities as you want for yourselves, and let them earn their own bread and be masters of their own life and luck.

If you have had a bad crop, if your harvest fails, or if you are ill or crippled, so that you are not able to earn your own bread, then, perhaps, I may be willing to help you.

Then I may take my own bread and give it to you, saying: *My bread is Yours!* This is Charity—not quite the same thing as love and righteousness. We cannot do without charity—in catastrophes and under exceptional conditions; but we cannot do with that alone. Love and righteousness are necessary. Charity, alms and subsidies can be necessary, but it is best if they are not necessary. I run the risk of beginning to pride myself that I am good; and you run the risk, if you become accustomed to charity, of your independence and self-respect being broken down. Charity is not all of love, and it is not Christian love if we try to do with charity alone.

You shall have your working-place, the same rights and freedoms as I have.

If you have done your work and earned your bread, and I come and take it, saying: *Your bread is Mine!* that is wrong, injustice, theft, robbery.

It is the way of recent Normal Social Conditions.

Theft and robbery are punished by law. But I can try to get your bread in other ways. In olden days I could make you my slave or my serf. Nowadays I can do it in a more polite way. I can own my own land, but I can also own the land, the working-place which is necessary for others. Then I can say: Well, you are allowed to work here, but I shall have your bread, a smaller or greater part of it. I can put mortgages on land, so that you have to pay your bread in interest. The result is the same. *Your bread is Mine!* It is still theft, still robbery, even if the laws allow it. Law and justice are not the same thing, but they ought to be, and they certainly shall be.

If your crop has failed on your working-place, and famine has resulted in hunger and scarcity in your house, then perhaps I may like to help you. But my own bread tastes so good that I do not wish to give it to you. Then I could go to my neighbour's house, around the back door, take his bread and give it to you. *His bread is Yours!*

That is Social Welfare, Beveridge Plans, and all that. It is sentimentality, distorted charity, and injustice against my neighbour. In this way, political life is corrupted, because political strife is reduced to a fight between classes and parties hoping to reach power—power of imposing taxes, power of giving subsidies, looking forward to getting your vote in return.

In fact, political life takes that shape and most people are so short-sighted that they give their votes, not to the people who pay the taxes, but to the parties which provide the subsidies.

Collaboration is the key to social life. If we work together in freedom, on mutual free contract, we are able to produce much more bread. But if we do so by force, pool the production under the State, and divide the result in some equal way, saying: We shall produce to the best of our ability, and consume according to our needs, then I eat my share of bread and say to you: Let us share again! My ability is not as great as yours, but my requirement is greater, enormous.

Our bread is Our bread! This is Communism.

In point of fact, men's abilities differ. Although we may have the same share of land and the same opportunities, it may be that you are more clever, more energetic, earlier up in the morning, while I am silly, stupid and lazy. You produce three loaves a day; I produce

only one. Some people say: We have not created ourselves, therefore we have to make conditions equal, for we must be "egalitarian." One loaf and three loaves make four loaves—that is, two for each of us. It certainly looks like equality in conditions, but it is not equality in right. The result is not very practical. I can live with only one loaf a day and when I can have one of yours in subsidies, I say: Why trouble so much? The next day I produce nothing at all. And you say: I am working hard the whole day, but the State and the taxes take the greater part of my product. Why trouble so much? The next day you produce only two loaves. Result: Two loaves in common instead of four. The community is thus made poorer. We see it in every country to-day, in every branch of activity.

You are clever. We resolve to put you in office, so that you can rule and direct, sitting at your writing-table, writing papers, proclamations, schemes, statistics, conducting enquiries and planning 5-year plans. I have to do the productive work, seriously hampered by restrictions and rationing, reading what you are writing, writing what you are asking for.

The result is smaller loaves, less bread, worse bread.

This is the Planned Economy, red tape, bureaucracy, State Control. "My Paper is your Bread!" Isn't it good?

Love and justice are ethical, they are moral, and they are an important part of religion. But not that alone: they are practical, productive and common sense.

So long as people keep saying: "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" we are like heathens and shall not be able to solve the problems.

We sometimes forget that man does not live by bread alone, but by spirit, by inspiration. On the other hand, it is a fact that man cannot live without his daily bread. Therefore we pray: "Give us this day our daily bread"! But in what way can we get it? In a world so rich and so blessed that it should be possible. Let us try to begin with righteousness.

What you produce is yours. What I produce is mine. What none of us have produced, the land, the gifts of Nature with all their riches, all their values, all their forces—they must belong to all of us.

Let us try to begin with justice. All other methods have failed. I believe that then all the other things will be added unto us. There will be bread enough for everybody, and there will be twelve basketsful more than we can eat.

(Address delivered at the International Conference.)

THE GEORGEISTS: ARE THEY HUMAN?—Address by Frank Dupuis

DURING this Conference almost every aspect of our supreme aim—justice in society—has been reviewed. There is however one aspect, often overlooked, which appears to me of sufficient importance to bring to your notice even at this concluding stage. That is the question: How we as individuals might appear to those not personally acquainted with us. Are we pictured as fanatics obsessed by a narrow idea, or as people moderately sane and possibly endowed with a sense of humour? It is obvious that the answer must affect the chances of promoting our ideas.

This subject occurred to me after the ramble which a party of us took yesterday; when I contrasted the atmosphere at The Hayes with other Conferences of "well-meaning" people which I have attended and came away resolved that wild horses would not drag me to another. How uncomfortably I recall the earnest well-meaningness of those gatherings, the strained enthusiasm, the whipped-up applause for the woolly sentences and question-begging phrases of leaders who evidently deprecated any question which pushed the enquiry home. And all the time I felt an unbearable struggle in my own mind between loyalty on one side and a sense of humour on the other, trying hard to stifle my suspicion that the rank and file never for a moment stopped to consider principle and consistency, were prepared to endorse any proposal officially advanced under the sacrosanct label, and were intellectually united on one theme only: the denunciation of rival *isms* and their partisans.

When you compare that atmosphere with your experiences during this astonishing week of intense living and supremely independent thinking you will admit I have reason for seeking some explanation. Our slight divergences here on some questions of expediency have served only to throw into relief the fact that each of us understands our principles, each knows exactly the meaning of the terms we use, and we all know exactly what reforms we want. What other movement could say this? I am

almost tempted to claim we are the only sane people in the world; especially after the ramble to which I referred. On that occasion, besides yielding ourselves to the charm of these green Derbyshire dales, we talked on almost every subject under the sun; and in that one afternoon I, at any rate, fell the helpless victim of as much laughter as during weeks of ordinary life. And the butt of our mirth was we ourselves, we Georgeists! Yet my companions happen to be among the most uncompromising Georgeists I have the pleasure of knowing. Surely this is evidence of sanity.

To my mind this reveals a quality of the greatest value to our movement, both morally and practically, and one we should never lose sight of.

One is reluctant to claim superior sanity, but I would remind you that this is not the same as claiming to be very clever. Many clever men have proved neither sane nor wise. It has been said there are two methods of attaining wisdom: one by intense study, scaling the heights of thought and knowledge; the other by exercising common sense to an uncommon degree. In this age of clashing *isms*, State propaganda and delegated thinking, I suggest that for any ordinary person engaged in working for a living the second of these methods is the more to be trusted. And anyone can apply common sense to social problems, provided he will first be a freeman in mind. If the first test of common sense is to know what you are talking about we can justly claim that, *before* going on to other considerations, we make quite certain what we mean by such words as wealth, land, labour, capital. I would feel more hopeful if the world's most boosted philosophers, economists and politicians would submit to this homely test.

But if we *are* sane I do not advise you to shout it from the housetops. In mental homes it is customary, I believe, to treat the patient's hallucinations at first with courtesy rather than contempt. And we live in a world in which the majority—including 99 per cent. of newspaper economists and 100 per cent. of radio economists—have so com-