

A Word with You

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"We never had it so good."

This is the sentiment of the day. Never before have we had so many automobiles, televisions, deep-freezes, etc.

In all this afflatus of prosperity, we have forgotten a few things. We've slipped into habits that would have shocked our forefathers. The women of the family (what family?) often have to work nowadays to keep things going. The men have to work overtime or, if they have a business, it seems to take more out of them, what with the demands, the taxes, outguessing the market, etc. New houses being built are more cramped and flimsy than in days of yore, in spite of technological progress.

And above all, we have forgotten that all this good that we never had it so, has been sustained by an inflationary wartime government-subsidized economy since 1939.

There is a significant paragraph in Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*, as what paragraph in that book isn't? In it he says, "When the sun passes the meridian, it can be told only by the way the short shadows fall; for the heat of the day yet increases," comparing this phenomenon to the real decline of civilization while it appears to be progressing. The same with the seasons—July, August and even September are pretty hot, though the days keep getting shorter after June 21st.

While land was free in this country the sun was rising to its zenith. There's no more free land and the sun is declining. We are feeling the increased warmth at this later date, because of the momentum gained by the burst of progress of those free-land days. Today is the effect of which yesterday was the cause—the bad as well as the good.

We learn from history books that in the 3rd century A.D. there was less poverty and better living conditions in Rome than in the days of the Republic. Progress! But what legacy was the 3rd century leaving for the 4th and 5th? Let's take stock of our own basic situation and not cluck too proudly. It's easy to feel the warmth. It takes a little more awareness to see the lengthening shadows.

There's one hope. The setting of the sun of civilization is not inexorable. A Joshua bearing justice can always make the sun stand still.