

A Word With You

HENRY GEORGE'S last work, *The Science of Political Economy*, is one to which I find myself increasingly drawn. It is a profound and suggestive work, although not as well-knit and dynamic as *Progress and Poverty*.

One thinks of Richard Wagner's last work, "Parsifal," which is also somewhat ponderous and long-drawn-out, and yet deeply rewarding.

Opinions differ on George's "Science." Historian Charles Beard saw in it important and illuminating insights on the nature of civilization. Historian Charles Barker thought the book was a mistake and concluded that Henry George realized his failure and deliberately martyred himself in the mayoralty campaign of 1897.

In a way, both historians are right. George did, in the "Science," delve deeply into the philosophic undergirding of his economic structure. It was a comprehensive job he was undertaking — perhaps more than he could manage by himself. His other works were undertaken to deal with specific issues and problems — including *Progress and Poverty*, wide-ranging though it is. But in the "Science," he was trying to unify the entire field of political economy on the broadest possible basis.

Another analogy that occurs to me is the work of Albert Einstein who, after giving the world his theory of relativity—a specific answer to a specific problem—sought, in his last years, to unite all the laws of motion in a

unified field theory, but did not complete this goal.

George should have had more help on his monumental task. His friends and followers instead would pull him out periodically into the hurly-burly of politics, then thrust him back into his study to write.

I am not one to say George erred in going into politics. He was both a thinker and a doer and cannot be understood without looking at both sides. If others worked with him in the field of action, why not also in the field of thought?

I do not know if George would have accepted a collaboration, or whether the results would have turned out as I imagine — but a joint effort, with George as the central guide, and such capable thinkers as Louis F. Post, Thomas Shearman, John Russell Young and others, might have produced a complete and definitive work.

Instead the "Science" was reverently published by George's son, untouched by other hands, in all its note-book incompleteness.

Even so, it is a monumental work and has the outlines of a tremendous world-outlook. It contains elaborations on wealth, on production and distribution, on the theory of value, on co-operation, conscious and unconscious — and it spells out in a broad context just why the free market and the single tax are the best for civilization.

— Robert Clancy

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The Henry George News, published monthly by the Henry George School of Social Science, 50 E. 69th Street, New York, N. Y. 10021, supports the following principle:

The community, by its presence and activity, gives rental value to land, therefore the rent of land belongs to the community and not to the landowners. Labor and capital, by their combined efforts, produce the goods of the community—known as wealth. This wealth belongs to the producers. Justice requires that the government, representing the community, collect the rent of land for the community purposes and abolish the taxation of wealth.

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