

The Moral Law

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In his article, "Two Major Influences" (GJ No. 55), Ernest A. Bryan speaks of the first as a study of Progress and Poverty and the second the influence of Loring D. Beckwith. Of course he is correct when he says the Georgist understands wages to be an individual product and rent a social product. However, would Henry George agree with Beckwith that morality concerns the individual only? According to Beckwith, society, not being able to do, to think and feel, is not governed by morality. We are told that society is influenced by natural law as are the tides, the seasons, the circulation of the blood, the digestion of our food.

In Henry George's Open Letter to Pope Leo XIII, he explains that there must be a "right way of raising public revenue. He adds that "It is clear this right way of raising public revenue must accord to the moral law." "Hence," he goes on, "It must not take from individuals what rightfully belongs to individuals. It must not give some an advantage over others..."

In Social Problems, Chapter 10, George argues that "if we would have a peaceful and healthful social state, we must conform our institutions to the great moral laws - laws to which we are absolutely subject, and which are as much above our control as are the laws of matter and motion."

In the Georgist philosophy society is indeed subject to the moral law.