

LOYALTY TO TRUTH

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Most readers would, I think, agree with the editor of the Georgist Journal (July 1974) in sympathising with the conclusions of the member of the Henry George Institute who dropped out because "we are getting nowhere." I also fully concur in the reply to him. The importance of the issue, however, requires attention.

Many Georgists (including myself) would feel that the facts call for more resoluteness and dedication to the cause of ethical truth, and would recollect Henry George's stirring challenges and his own inspiring example. Another reaction, which I consider sound, is that truth does not depend on numbers, and that every new truth faces long and hard opposition. "Truth for ever on the scaffold, Wrong for ever on the throne, But that scaffold sways the future..."

The basic answer is the moral necessity of every individual to investigate truth carefully and persistently, and to arrive at whatever conclusions he can. Public opinion or "the climate of the age" is entirely irrelevant to this.

Georgists share the failings of the rest of the human race. We exhibit a disappointing tendency to shirk or to stray from the path of truth. In our adoption of the Georgist principles, instead of following George's precept and example of resolutely following truth wherever it may lead we have very largely adopted certain half-baked slogans based on a partial and immature grasp of George's great and basic truths. The radical side of George's teachings has been largely forgotten, and "popular" Georgism is in many ways quite opposed to what we read in George's writings.

I am not advocating loyalty to Henry George, but I am advocating loyalty to truth. To me George has justified his claim to be a guide to and a revealer of truth and has thus placed me heavily in his debt, although I have not failed to note certain defects and failures in his writings which appear to me to be mostly minor and superficial.

Whether or not "we are getting nowhere" seems to me entirely irrelevant in this context. It would of course be nice but utopian to find everybody agreeing with us, and all of us agreeing with each other, but what matters is whether we are loyal to truth.