

The Spirit of Henry George

—PRISCILLA DUNWIDDY—

Recalcitrant moods, like gusts of wind on an orderly desk, leave hopes and thoughts in annoying disarray. It is a simple matter to close the window and put things right on the desk. But sometimes, for the Georgist and his philosophy, it is quite the opposite. He can never be free from critical jets flung against his accepted and rightly treasured insights.

So clear is his logic and so sound is his conviction, that he is often resentful of opposition. A great many expletives come to mind that express his emotional reaction to the stupidity of the unenlightened.

In many cases this critical judgment of the opposition by the Georgist is merited — still, there is no reason why the cloud against which he inveighs should fill his own being.

Meeting the Adversary

If the dissenting mood is like a gusty draft with no continuing force it is a foolish waste of emotional energy to give it more importance than it deserves. It is better to close the window—and the incident—in a polite, cheerful manner.

When the criticism is intelligent, though unschooled, the privilege and the task are clear. If we do not persuade, or at least set the antagonist in the direction of sympathy for the ideas and philosophy of Henry George, the fault may be his—or ours.

When we can achieve objectivity and not be dogmatic, sometimes, as Mr. Royal wisely stated last month, *we may learn something*. It is not always possible to know the results achieved or the impression left upon the opposer. The Georgist can be sure that he has succeeded within himself, however, if in every assault of ideas he has used them to bring his mind into more orderly form for the expression of his philosophy.

This philosophy (of Henry George) while it has specific directions for action, recognizes the complexity of human relations and the problems posed by established custom. Appreciable results nevertheless are accumulating over a period of time. The best seeds for growth will be found in the minds of those who can take all ideas for and against Georgism and make of them a growing order in faith and understanding.

Accepting everything in this way — realistically instead of emotionally — leaves us, not with a mood, but with a mode for going on.