

## BOOK DEPARTMENT.

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### REVIEWS.

HENRY GEORGE *vs.* HERBERT SPENCER.

*A Perplexed Philosopher, being an examination of Mr. Herbert Spencer's various utterances on the Land Question, with some incidental reference to his Synthetic Philosophy.* By HENRY GEORGE. Pp. 319. New York: Charles L. Webster & Co. 1892.

*Social Statics, abridged and revised; together with the Man versus the State.* By HERBERT SPENCER. Pp. 431. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1892.

In his latest polemic Mr. George makes so bold as to accuse the "Synthetic Philosopher" of moral cowardice. Under the three general captions, the "Declaration," "Repudiation" and "Recantation," is graphically related the history of Mr. Spencer's opinions on land ownership. In "Social Statics" (edition of 1850) he set forth that all men have "equal rights to the use of this world;" that private ownership of land is "an infringement" of those rights; and that society, after giving compensation to owners, should resume the ownership. In 1878, Mr. George, in "Progress and Poverty," cited Mr. Spencer's authority in support of his contention. But in 1882, finding his name coupled with Mr. George's, and condemned for advancing a dangerous doctrine, he disclaimed all adherence to such "visionary" proposals in a letter to the *St. James' Gazette*; saying that he had already withdrawn "Social Statics" from English circulation and interdicted translations, as studies subsequent to that work had caused him to change his ideas as to the practicability of land nationalization. Again, in 1884, in "Man versus the State" and in 1889, in

letters to the *Times*, he took occasion to reject Mr. George's theories; and in 1891, in "Justice," he set forth his modified views on Land. Meanwhile, all this time "Social Statics," the sale of which had been forbidden in England, was being printed and sold here in this country. Mr. Spencer brought out an "expurgated" edition in 1892.

Mr. George tells this story of the trials of the synthetic but "perplexed philosopher" in his usual trenchant and taking style. He guards himself admirably from side and rear attacks by quoting in full everything Mr. Spencer has ever written on land, the chapters in "Social Statics" (1850) and "Justice," and the letters to London papers. But he allows his anger to carry him too far. His language too often is vituperative; he sneers at the philosopher's method of compiling his synthetic philosophy; and he even drags in Mr. Spencer's pleasures and pastimes as proofs of his allegations—all of which are unworthy of a dignified book and of Mr. George. Again, all his comments on the evolutionary philosophy are lugged in, and only expose him to attack where he is not prepared to defend himself.

He very properly, however, and very adroitly rings the changes upon the stoppage of the sale of "Social Statics" in England years ago for fear it would be used in the dissemination of "communistic" ideas, and its continued sale in America, where the people are supposedly equally unsophisticated. This strange inadvertence Mr. George explains on the hypothesis that Mr. Spencer did not want to jeopardize his reputation in England, but was unwilling to forego the large royalty received from his American publishers.

But, in spite of Mr. George's circumstantial evidence, it is to be doubted whether the man who has constantly waged war against the dominant religious, philosophical and political theories and parties is afraid of his conclusions in this one lone instance.

When Mr. Spencer brought himself to revising "Social Statics," he evidently did it in some petulance. Instead of revising his chapters on land and property as he does the remaining ones of the book, he simply throws them out. His excisions were so unsparing that, to make a more sizable and salable book, he had to incorporate his well-known brochure, "The Man versus the State." His readers will greatly prefer the old version. He has condensed too much. One can see no reason why his modified views on land were not included in this volume instead of referring the reader elsewhere. Mr. Spencer has weighty and worthy reasons for thinking it impossible to obtain pure equity in land ownership, even granting, as he does, that present arrangements are traceable to "unscrupulous violence." He has always differed from Mr. George as to compensation of land-owners.

If for nothing else, they should have been given to give completeness to his little treatise on absolute ethics.

Yet inadvertently he has affirmed all that he wrote in 1850. He begins his chapter on "Socialism" with "all men have equal rights to the use of the earth" just as they have to air, light and water; and he admits that "land nationalization" is "equitable in the abstract." We find ourselves, therefore, in somewhat of a quandary when he tells us that "the moral law is the law of the perfect man," that it ignores present conditions, and "prescribes the conduct of an ideal humanity," which it must be man's duty ever to approximate, and at the same time condemns Mr. George's endeavors to attain to that state.

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TWO BOOKS ON INSURANCE FOR THE POOR.

*Insurance and Saving.* A Report on the Existing Opportunities for Working Class Thrift, with an introduction on the Poor Law as an Obstacle to Thrift and Voluntary Insurance. Charity Organization Series, Vol. I. Pp. 117. London: Swan, Sonnenschein & Co. 1892.

*The State and Pensions in Old Age.* By J. A. SPENDER, with an Introduction by ARTHUR H. D. ACLAND, M.P. Pp. 161. London: Swan, Sonnenschein & Co. 1892.

To those familiar with the work of the Charity Organization Society, but little need to be said of this volume. It consists of a report of a special committee of the Society on this subject, with the report referred to in the title prefixed. The avowed object of the Society in issuing a series of volumes rather than the previous separate reports is to add dignity to its publications, and win for them a wider recognition. The portion on the Poor Law is now about half a century old, and is largely based on Eden's "State of the Poor" (1797). With the facts taken from Eden, are composed the facts of the first three years following the Reform of the Poor Law in 1834. The conclusions reached are such as are matters of universal belief to-day, namely, that an indiscriminate system of outdoor relief discourages thrift and saving.

The remaining portion of the work gives only a fair presentation of the work of the friendly societies and trade unions, as means of encouraging thrift and of relieving distress. It is shown that all the existing organizations, State and voluntary, fall far short of the desired result.