

permit, in the King's Message at the opening session of Parliament. Does it mark an economic epoch, and the opening of the final struggle for industrial emancipation, in Great Britain and throughout the world?

**"My ministers propose to introduce legislation to secure for the community its share in the site value of land."**

## The Spiritual Basis of Georgist Economics

Laurie J. Quinby, at the Henry George Congress

**W**E live in a universe of law. I speak not of statutes, but of law. Statutes are artificial—a device of man. Law is Natural—the expression of Infinite Power, Intelligence or Mind, as one prefers. Since the Primal Dawn, Natural Law has dominated the affairs of man. Though, in all ages, man has enacted statutes—changing these as suited his whim—Natural Law has remained unaltered. Man has attempted to amend, or vacate the Natural Law. Every effort in that direction has failed.

The greatest obligation any man owes to life—or to himself—is to be intelligent. His primal debt to the Infinite is to understand Natural Law which, being obeyed, brings him into harmonious relationship with God. If Natural Law is the Will of God, then the most reverential prayer ever uttered is, "Thy Will be done."

When we see that, from inevitable necessity, like follows like, that love breeds love, while hate engenders hate, we are forced to the conclusion that deep within the heart of Nature there is Law which executes itself. In every relation of life, the careful observer will find this truth. Law allows no exceptions. A saint falling from a tower will pay the same price to the law of gravity that will be paid by the most erring. Wrote the great Emerson: "If one could, in the least particular, derange the order of Nature, who would accept the gift of life."

As it is with the individual life, so it has always been in the relations of man in communities. Nations are no more exempt from the operation of Natural Law than are the meanest of creatures. Obey or pay is as true of nations as of persons. The history of the world is the story of the rise and fall of nations. That they should rise and evolve to greatness is natural. For, in rising, they conform to the Natural Law of Growth. An expression of the Law of Growth is that all things follow the line of least resistance. In human society that simply means that the wants of man shall be satisfied with the least possible effort. There is philosophy in laziness, if you please. All the progress man has made has been due to his effort to achieve his desires—to satisfy his wants—with the greatest economy of time and energy. All modern improvements in every field of activity display this. Then, since self-preservation is the first law of Nature, individuals in society learn

to satisfy their wants with as little effort as possible. To a certain extent they make a study of Natural Law. They see how they may, through the power of organized society, convert to their personal uses the wealth produced by all. First they discover the law through their observation of its action, then they enact statutes to limit the operation of that law in their personal interests. Were all the people intelligent that wrong could not be permitted.

I say to a certain extent, they become intelligent. If only they were to pursue the study of Natural Law to its conclusion, they would discover that it is also a Law of Nature that any course in human conduct which interferes with the equal rights of others, ultimately must result in an unhealthy reaction against all who are guilty of that infraction. Nature hates monopolies and exceptions, and finally destroys all of them. So we see how any course which is not naturally good for the most humble cannot be good for the great. For injustice it is that brings about the decay of nations. That nations should fall, therefore, is natural only in the sense that they have violated the basic of law of life—that is, Justice. No nation ever fell where Justice prevailed. No civilization ever declined so long as the people were intelligent, just, happy and unafraid.

In pointing out the true basis of statute law, Blackstone showed that happiness is the only justification for human enactments. He emphasized the truth that the pursuit of happiness was a Natural Right—inherent through our very nature and from the fact of our existence. It follows that it is unalienable because it is bestowed by a Power beyond our understanding or control. Then he demonstrated that all the validity which any human statute could possess rested solely on that Infinite foundation.

I once knew a cripple of exceptionally active mind. His condition led him into morbid and rebellious thinking with respect to Nature or to Nature's God. He said to me, "When I see human misery all about me; when I observe that wealth and the good things of life gravitate to underserved places, and that men, without demerit, are poor and miserable, then I am rebellious. If there is a Supreme Being—having omnipotent power—so long as I see that he tolerates these conditions, then I declare him to be a monster, unworthy the worship of mankind." He had overlooked the fact of history that God does not tolerate the things of which he complained—as the fall of all empires eloquently shows.

One day I went to my friend with a book, I said to him: "Here is a book I would like to have you read." Looking at it he said: "Well, that looks like it deals with problems of this life, unmixed with visions of a chimerical hereafter. I'll read it." For a long time he studied that book. One morning he brought it to me, saying: "Well, Quinby, I've gone through this and it has gone through me. And do you know?" he added, "I must confess that Henry George has done for me what I have always denied any man could do—he has proved to me that there is a God."



I need not mention my own emotions, nor seek to describe to you the new light that shone in all his visage. It was an inspiration. But he went on to explain. He said, "You know how I have always felt regarding the existence of a Supreme Being. Now I know now that all the misery of life is due, not to the decrees of a malignant power, but to the ignorance of man. I can see if man only had the intelligence to adjust his social arrangements to Natural Law, all would be peaceful, prosperous and happy. The wisdom which now I see lying back of all this, I am ready to reverence as God."

Is it any wonder, friends, that when he had finished writing "Progress and Poverty," in his humble home, here in this city, fifty years ago, at lonely midnight, Henry George fell upon his knees and wept like a child?

Henry George discovered nothing. He merely recognized natural phenomena, apparent to any careful observer today and in all ages. He sought to establish no cut and dried system. He did not propose to make man over. He knew that every trait of character which man possesses is natural and right. He knew that what we call selfishness is but the manifestation of a useful trait of man shown under abnormal conditions. In a natural environment that trait would bring about true self-betterment in the individual without in the least bringing woe to any. It is not and cannot be an injury to the laggard pupil at school for another pupil to reach one hundred per cent. "For how could there be greed, where all had enough? How could the vice, the crime, the ignorance, the brutality, that spring from poverty, exist where poverty had vanished? Who would crouch where all were free-men; who oppress where all were peers?"

As Henry George did not seek to re-make man, neither did he propose to tear down and re-make our social order. All he desired was that our social order cease its destructive purpose in unmaking man. He did not propose the overthrow of what civilization had achieved. He only offered the gentle suggestion that civilization itself cast off the excrescences in the form of unjust statutes which were infecting it unseen. His proposal might be considered revolutionary by the timid, but only in the sense that truth is revolutionary. Only in the sense that the Golden Rule—which is applied common sense—is revolutionary.

Henry George proved that Nature is not niggardly, and that in the bestowal of her rewards she recognizes no favorites. She gives to labor and to labor only of her abundant supply. "What will you have?" she asks. "Take it and pay for it." Take it by the payment of labor. Beg for it at the loss of manhood. Steal it at your peril. Those are the three ways—and the only ways—by which men secure this world's goods. Beg, steal or produce. Beg, and die of dry rot. Steal, and destroy all civilization. Produce, and the most hopeful vision that man ever entertained of the Golden Age to be, shall be dimmed by the realized glory of the future.

The storehouse of Nature groans with an unlimited supply—not of wealth—but of the SOURCE of all wealth. It is not wealth—it is not supply—until the industrious hand and productive brain unite in bringing it forth, fashioned to suit the needs of man. That part of it which man consumes for his bodily needs and in satisfaction of all human want is wealth. That part of it which he reserves to facilitate his labor in more economical effort in producing wealth is capital. So, in its final and accurate sense, capital is only stored-up labor, whose interests are identical with labor, and not antagonistic. Then, if these premises be true, any one who receives any form of wealth without rendering to some one or to society the full equivalent in service of what he takes, must align himself in the category either of beggar or of thief. The only distinction there is between beggar and thief lies in the fact that the beggar satisfies his wants through working upon human sympathy, while the other satisfies his through cunning and treachery.

Henry George saw that the land—which is Nature's storehouse—must be free of access to all mankind. He saw that as certain men took possession of any part, they thereby excluded all others from that part. None of them having produced it—yet it not being practical for all, personally, to own and work it—it was the right of all to name the conditions under which those in possession might hold and use it. His method of adjusting this was simply to extend to its logical conclusion what we are already doing in a limited sense. He saw that land possesses beneath its surface valuable minerals needful for mankind and that its surface yields food under cultivation. He saw, what was even more apparent, that man is a social being and seeks companionship for the increase of human happiness. Whatever man might do he cannot separate himself from the land. Therefore, as he gathers in communities, his social attributes, his intelligent and ethical qualities all reflect themselves in the value of land on which he builds his social system. As all these values are either the bestowal of Nature or the result of the aggregate activities of all men, they cannot justly be appropriated by any individual or set of individuals. Being a social product, they belong equally to all.

To accomplish full justice for all, Henry George saw that it is not necessary for society either to buy up or to confiscate the land. Either of these ways would be unjust and ineffectual. The fair and equal distribution of the benefits of these natural bounties would still remain an unsolved problem. So he proposed the practical and common sense plan of wiping out all taxes upon thrift and industry—because such taxes limit enterprise and production—and to place all taxation upon the value of land regardless of the use the holder of any given piece might make of it. That, in a nutshell, is the Single Tax, which is not a tax at all. It is merely a recompense by the individual to society for what Nature and society do for



him. It would leave to him all the fruits of his own labor and enterprise, including, even, some portion of land values as compensation for his service in securing them for society. It is equitable, ethical and just. It is the application of the Natural Law of Justice, for Justice is the natural order. Repeal the unjust laws enacted by men, and the Natural Law of Justice remains. Justice is merely the absence of injustice.

In all the phenomena of Nature, in the chemical laboratory, in the infinite details of all social order, in the mental and spiritual unfolding and development of this wonderful piece of work called man, we have endless illustrations of the perfect balancing of all things. Nothing is left to chance. The scientist could not be a scientist were it not for the fact that throughout Nature he has observed absolute, undeviating law. Given any circumstance, and he will determine the exact effect of any cause. "Seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you," is the expression of unchanging law. There is a perfect natural adjustment in all the relations of life. Love is the great creative power. All things that are lovely and of good report, spring from it, while hate, envy, jealousy, engender antagonisms, treachery and war—all destructive of peace and good will—undermining all civilization.

Time never made ancient good uncouth, nor ancient error just and right today. Whatever was truly good and just, still remains so, and whatever was destructive of these ends at any time are so today, however may have changed man's concept of them. It is because of these observed and demonstrated phenomena that I am convinced that all life is spiritual and divine. It is because the illuminated mind of Henry George perceived these spiritual truths and showed how they could be made applicable in the solution of the economic problems of the world, that I dare to say he spoke for all time. For if these laws, the fact of whose existence I do but faintly glimpse and suggest, are actual, then they indicate the constant presence of some infinite love and grandeur beyond the conception of the human mind. We see only the effect of these unchanging laws, however obscure to our mentality may be the Law-giver. It is the realization of that fact which gives to our knees a tendency to bend, and which, in the language of my friend of other times, we are impelled to reverence as God. It is because of those truths that we may safely trust that the economic philosophy of Henry George has a solid spiritual basis. I dare also to say that this world will never be civilized, this life will not be glorious to the entire human family, Justice will not prevail over all, peace and plenty will not be realized, nor human suffering one jot effectually abated, until the world essentially recognizes and applies these fundamental truths so eloquently set forth by Henry George.

All men must secure free and ready access to the Father's infinite Source of Supply.

## Direct Political Action

LONA INGHAM ROBINSON AT THE HENRY  
GEORGE CONGRESS

CIVILIZATIONS, all down the ages, have slowly and painfully "carried on" a few hundred or a few thousand years and then passed into oblivion. Early historians record symptoms of their nation's decay; current writers declare we are traveling the same road ourselves. But what is fundamentally wrong they do not indicate.

We often hear the trite statement that ours is a "transition state." Ancient writers likewise made the same declaration as to their own times. Change is our normal condition whether we advance or recede.

But as a whole nations can advance in only two ways: individually and collectively: individually through thought and material inventions, collectively through mass movements led by chieftains, kings and other dictators.

Thus we have two kinds of conduct: individual conduct towards our fellow men and collective conduct which in primitive times is assumed by whatever headman there is. He casts the vote for all. But people grew restive and wanted to have a voice in their own collective conduct.

The Town Meeting was born and with it politics: the only method by which people can determine what their collective conduct shall be toward home and foreign states, corporations and individuals.

Now all down the ages individual progress is comparatively free. One man invents a crooked stick plow or a stone axe; a woman discovers wool and invents the spindle and crude loom; other men and women copy and improve upon them. Thus the two wheel cart and chariot, the canoe and sail-boat started on their long journey to automobile and airplane of today. So with agriculture and building arts, every betterment could be copied and improved. Individual initiative was free. And the last 150 years have seen these magic mechanical inventions multiply with increasing speed.

But when we consider our collective conduct and activities, obstacles arise at every step. And when we come to the making of laws, constitutions, the setting up of courts of justice in whose power lies the happiness or misery of the whole people, the machinery or methods of determining what our collective conduct shall be are governed by past ages.

Centuries roll by. Astrology merges into Astronomy, alchemy grows into chemistry, chirurgery changes into surgery by individual action. But virtually the same principle of taxation we used today was used by Herod when he farmed out his taxing job.

Cuneform inscriptions on brick changed to writing on papyrus, on parchment to printing on paper; thought and then speech flew on wire till finally the magic wireless and radio! But landlords are still recording their titles and