

LAND & LIBERTY

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letter from the publisher

In his book *The Science of Political Economy* Henry George shows how the cause of everything that an individual person consciously makes or does in the physical world may be traced to activity in the subtle or causal world of 'spirit'. He shows how this is where we first desire and will something before we do or make it.

The socioeconomic relevance of this is that if wealth is not distributed in harmony with the will of producers their willingness to produce is reduced. The distribution of wealth is therefore an intimate aspect of production itself and is not, as it is commonly treated by most economists, a separate subject. Thus anything that distorts the natural distribution of wealth such as theft in its various guises, or taxation, matters to the production of wealth.

George marked however a wider philosophical relevance of this aspect of natural law. He noted that our ability to know, think, feel, or do anything, depends upon this subtle or causal world of spirit and is first experienced as an awareness of our own existence.

Direct observation and analysis together with studies of the writings of some of the master teachers of mankind persuaded George that the basis of this consciousness of one's own existence, i.e. the certainty of 'Self' that 'I am', must be the same for everyone. He then reasoned that for Man this basis must be ever present and that Man's understanding of the creation, of which he and society are a part, must be based on this. His studies revealed how this basis or Self is known by many different names according to different cultures, traditions and languages and that in the Christian tradition, in which he was raised, it was often referred to by the word God.

Linking then Man's experience of producing wealth, i.e. making things, he reasoned how the ultimate cause-effect relationships that are evident in the natural world may be seen to express the will of an 'All Maker' or 'God' and that this explains how a truly scientific approach to economic phenomena, i.e. one that takes all aspects of human nature into account, may be reconciled with the fundamental tenet of the world's major religions.

He concludes his section on natural law with these words:

To such recognition of will or spirit, reason as it searches from effect to cause, must come before it can rest content. Beyond this reason cannot go. Why is it that some things always coexist with other things? and that some things will always follow other things? The Mohammedan will answer "it is the will of God". The man of our Western civilisation will answer: "It is a law of Nature." The phrase is different but the answer one.

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