

THE "CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR" SAYS IT

We give the text of the striking article in the Christian Science Monitor of July 14, which was briefly referred to in our previous issue. The writer is Mr. W. Clifford Harvey, the Real Estate Editor of that paper.

TAX-CONSCIOUS PUBLIC

SINGLE LEVY ON LAND VALUE WINS INCREASING ATTENTION

"How would you like to abolish all forms of taxation and start from scratch with only one tax to pay every year—a tax on land values?"

Louder and louder that question is being raised to-day by a nation-wide organisation of "single-tax" theorists in the face of mounting taxes of all types, forms, and means of collection, both hidden and open.

In the growing complexities of the national tax structure, the thousands of followers of Henry George are getting more and more attention from the tax-conscious public, if not from their tax-levying legislatures.

For more than 50 years the "single-tax" theorists have been expounding the philosophy of their one-time leader, Henry George, who gave them a text-book called *Progress and Poverty*.

To-day, there is hardly a community of any size without its organisation of "single taxers" who find that modern tax emergencies are gradually adding to the import of their demands for a solid, nation-wide reform in the tax system.

Practically everything you buy, everything you do, and everywhere you go, there is a tax payment in it the consumer turns around, there's a government agent somewhere, either in cash or in the works. Every time there holding out for a tax payment.

On a \$12,000 house, the buyer pays between \$2,000 and \$3,000 in a multiplicity of taxes, many of which he doesn't know exist.

Let's make the whole business simple, the followers of Henry George say, in a new flood of material they are dealing of to an alerted public.

What they propose is not a tax on real estate, for real estate includes improvements which should be encouraged and not stifled by taxation. They would tax land values only, increasing these values to the point where they would absorb all the requirements of the public treasury.

When Henry George first expounded that theory back in the late 1800's, there were fewer taxes by the thousands than there are to-day. Yet he saw that a "single tax" would do away with an army of tax gatherers and other officials and thus simplify and purify government of the people.

From the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation in New York a new pamphlet has come outlining the promise of the single tax, tinged with a glow of reformation that might help to remove "fraud, bribery, and corruption from the tax system."

"Since land out-of-doors cannot be removed or destroyed, it constitutes a form of fixed values readily and easily ascertained," the pamphlet continued. "A tax on land value can be collected with a minimum of cost and the least strain on public morals."

But the foundation insists that there are other tremendous ramifications to the single tax proposal which would enormously increase the production of wealth, make expensive the withholding of vacant land from productivity, and remove the burdens that now weigh upon industry and thrift.

"When we tax houses, crops, money, furniture, capital, and wealth," the foundation contended, "we take from individuals what rightfully belongs to them. But when we tax ground values, we take from individuals what does not belong to them, but belongs to the community."

"By paying a tax on the land to the community, the tenant pays for the right to use it. But he should not be prevented from using it to the fullest by also taxing the use to which the land is put."

Those are the fundamentals upon which the Henry George movement is gaining increasing ground to-day. It is a movement that differentiates between the value of land and buildings in a way that does not tax the initiative and enterprise of the individual. Tax revenues are thus derived from the rental of land (tax if you will) which is jointly owned by the community at large.

BELIEF AND ACTION

(From a paper submitted at the Dorking Conference of the Henry George School of Social Science.)

I have often been told that Liberty means Anarchy. Those who make such statements assume that if true Liberty were given to men, they would lose all sense of proportion, that planning would cease and civilisation would be thrown into confusion and chaos. Opponents of Liberty often seek to confuse it with License. We are told from all political platforms alike that regulations, prohibitions and government controls are necessary, as measures to safeguard the rights of individuals; that the multitude of restrictive legislation will even extend our liberties! To me, this is an absolute contradiction. It arises from dealing with effects instead of causes, and I think, too, from a misconception as to what Liberty really means. Liberty does not mean leaving things as they are, nor does it mean the "law of the jungle." Liberty is a word in its own right, not a word to be tagged on to any other word as it suits the user. Liberty means that everyone should have freedom to do whatsoever he wishes on equal terms with his fellow men, his freedom is limited only by the like freedom of others. This involves the establishment of equal rights for every man (Justice), to share in what nature has provided, and a sacred right to what he produces as his own against every other man and the State.

Instead of working for these ideals, however, what are the roads along which we are being invited to travel to-day? They all lead in the same direction and although the routes may be different, the end is ultimately the same. We can take the road we are following to-day, trying to improve social conditions by State action, arbitrarily controlling, planning and regulating the lives and productive activities of men, piling law upon law to deal with each new evil—many of which spring from these very laws; or, we can follow the path of Liberty, finding where our institutions have parted from the natural and just order of Liberty; putting society upon a firm and just basis leaving man free to earn his living in any legitimate way, secure in the knowledge that he receives the full fruits of his labour and knowing that no man has an unnatural advantage over him.

I know only too well from personal experience that every aspect of George's Economics and Philosophy cannot be grasped in ten weeks. But this I do know; the basic truths can be understood, and understanding that much, I know the urge will come to you to do something. It

is no use believing, however, that the people will come tumbling over each other in an effort to hear more about our philosophy. It is not as easy as that. On the contrary, as most of you must know, sometimes our ideas arouse antagonism and suspicion. The fight will be long.

I believe that education is vitally important, that education must precede agitation. As Patrick Edward Dove says, "Knowledge is credence based on sufficient evidence . . . correct credence is absolutely essential to the human race before that race can know and work out its own well being." Perhaps, however, even more important to me is the thought that Oscar H. Geiger, the founder of the American School, voiced in 1914 when he said that if by any chance we did manage to obtain legislation that secured justice, we must not delude ourselves that it could be maintained. "The people themselves," he said, "would soon undo or sanction the undoing passively, if not actively, of any law, however just or right it may be, which they did not understand."

If such a thing happened, it would be a tragedy.

Therefore, I believe that education should come first. We must try and have more and more schools, as this method has proved itself to be one of the best and surest way of educating the people. Indeed, I think I can say that so far it has proved itself to be the best recruiter to the movement, of those who must carry on the teaching.

The next most obvious and easy thing to do is the writing of letters to the press, local and national. The value of letters to the Editor should not be under-rated. I think that possibly this is one of the best and cheapest means of propaganda and I feel everyone should do this, not just think about it or make pious resolutions—but get down to it until it becomes a habit.

There are also the open-air meetings and speakers are needed, as are also helpers to distribute leaflets. This brings me to the political party. I do not think much of the possibilities here, although this might be the thing to do when we are very much stronger. We might then be able to form one, or perhaps even better, take over an existing party. But for the present, NO.

I have certainly not been able to mention all the things that we can do. Let us not wait for other people to do something. Let us all work in whatever way suits us best, for the fulfilment of this great truth. As George puts it, "Let no one imagine that he has no influence. Whatever he may be, and wherever he may be placed, the man who thinks becomes a light and a power. Whoever becomes imbued with a noble idea kindles a flame from which other torches are lit."

ANNOUNCEMENT

Price and Subscription Rates

Taking effect on January 1, 1951, the price of LAND & LIBERTY will be 1s. per issue and the annual postal subscription will be 10s., U.S.A. and Canada \$2.

This increase in price has been necessitated by the higher cost of production which for some time has exceeded the price of sale.

Until the end of the present year, subscriptions will remain at the existing rate (5s. or \$1 per annum) and will cover the twelve months from the date on which they are received.

NOTE:—By special arrangement, the existing subscription of 5s. or \$1 a year continues unaltered for those who at the same time are contributing to the funds of the United Committee, the International Union, the Henry George School or any of the organisations associated with the work of the movement.

EXAMPLE FROM SPAIN

In our previous issue we mentioned the request received from Don Francisco Alvarez for a large number of the Spanish translation of the International Conference Declaration of Principle and Policy, for distribution to his clients throughout Spain. Noticing that report, Don Lemos Ortega of Sevilla has written: "Don Francisco Alvarez, Urbano of Constantina, is one of the oldest Georgeists in this country. In 1924 when he was Mayor of that town, he issued a country-wide manifesto declaring war on the existing system of taxation, proposing the Taxation of Land Values and inviting all the Local Authorities to join in his demand. He did not achieve the success he deserved because the vested interests which dominated the dictatorial government of Primo de Rivera did all they could to prevent the government from looking at the fiscal reform proposed by the intelligent and patriotic Mayor of Constantina. Later, under the republic, Don Alvarez Urbano got out an edition of *Progress and Poverty* which he presented to each of the the deputies in the Cortes, to the ministers of the Government and to the politicians who were busy-bodies in those days."

"MY NEIGHBOUR'S LANDMARK"

This welcome revival of the late Frederick Verinder's classic which was first published in 1911 is issued both in response to a continual demand for it and as a fitting memorial to a long life spent selflessly advocating the Georgeist doctrine that by the taxation of land values the equal rights of all to the land may be secured.

In clear, forceful language, reminiscent of Henry George's style, Frederick Verinder reveals that it was early recognised that "Land is the mother and Labour the father of all Wealth." Here are no heretical Welfare State proposals for artificial Full Employment schemes and compulsory insurance, for guaranteed wages and prices and juggling with currencies but instead a vivid appreciation by the early Hebrews that God is Just, that He is the Maker and sole Owner of the land on and from which alone men can live, and to which all men have equal rights. Poverty, enslavement and exploitation were seen to be the fruits of land monopoly. The Mosaic Laws proclaimed and safeguarded the individual's right to use land, affording him security of tenure and the full fruits of his labour. Alienation and monopoly were denounced as heinous sins punishable by captivity.

My Neighbour's Landmark which when first published was welcomed by many ministers of religion, including some Jewish Rabbis, and which was used by members of the clergy as material for sermons, is an ideal gift book for ministers, Church workers and all those whose religion includes the aspiration for social justice on this earth. For many it has brought, and will bring, an awareness that the fundamental cause of Society's many misfortunes lies in making land private property, and that the primary task for social reformers is to restore equal access to Nature's store-house; while all those in our movement will be fortified and encouraged by the re-appearance and message of this scholarly yet simple little classic.

With portrait included, a forward to this edition, paying suitable tribute to the author, gives a brief sketch of his life and work. The book is published by the Land and Liberty Press, Ltd., at 3s. 6d. net.

P. R. STUBBINGS.