

## Advice to Ministers —And Others

By Rev. W. Wylie Young

This letter is being sent to about one hundred and fifty ministers who have requested either to be enrolled in the correspondence course of the Henry George School or have in other ways expressed a desire for further information. . . .

Some years ago while I was in Buffalo a field representative working for the Henry George School visited me because he knew of my interest in the philosophy of Henry George. He prevailed upon me to start a class. In order to ease the burden, he agreed to see that it was financed and that all supplies were ordered. He called on local Georgists, who gave him enough money to pay for publicity material, and I was to send out cards to a large number of possible prospects—lawyers, ministers, teachers, or any likely groups.

I was very much surprised to have forty people turn up for the first class.

Later I moved to Batavia and assumed the pastorate of a church which was theologically liberal and inclined toward social and economic conservatism.

It was then that I decided to try an experiment. I had a theory that to preach a particular economic doctrine was hardly cricket. There are certain general ideals that one should emphasize, but to concentrate on a particular analysis and expect to maintain peace and harmony might be difficult. But to teach a particular interpretation seemed quite fair and possible. Those who differed might wish to take exception to certain ideas and it would be their privilege in a class discussion.

I knew that materials would be available and that the course had been prepared by well-informed persons. The book, "Progress and Poverty," had been broken down

and divided into ten parts, each part constituting a lesson. Questions and answers had been drawn up covering all the major points and these sheets were available free of charge at the Henry George School.

In order to get a class I simply announced from the pulpit that I would teach a course in "Fundamental Economics and Sociology."

I did not at first say too much about Henry George. Most people knew nothing about him and so his name to them would carry very little weight. Those who did know about him had generally been prejudiced against investigating his ideas and had a notion that his approach was of the crack-pot variety.

Naturally, one does not find large numbers of people flocking to take a course until they are convinced that it may be interesting and worth their time. I did occasionally get in a plug for the

idea whenever it seemed reasonable and natural. As things developed, more and more people seemed to want to be "exposed," until well over a hundred had taken the course.

Not all came through with strong convictions. Some held out against me to the bitter end. Others got the idea and would do their utmost to help convince the doubters. . . .

If I were unconvinced but willing to be shown, I would take this action: I would ask a few—six or eight—good clear-thinking people to join with me in a process of investigation. As leader of the group I might offer to lead in the discussion, and with the helps that can be secured free from the Henry George School I would lead the group through the discussion. I would pick the group with some care. There are some people who simply cannot be objective and who cannot think logically. At first, these should be left out of the picture. One cannot always tell the type in advance, but a person who has never felt that things might bear investigation

and that changes were needed is such a person. If they can observe poverty, depressions, wars, revolutions, and all sorts of social horrors and not be inclined to think something should be done, there is really very little prospect of changing them. . . . They are the unthinking ones who accept the status quo and fit into whatever pattern seems to be the mode. They will change their minds when the important people change theirs.

The most generally accepted method of using the lesson sheets is to have certain members take up a discussion of each question in the order in which it appears. Frequently the student will turn out

to be a "dead ender." He will state in a few words the answer and let it go at that. Here the teacher has to be prepared to enlarge on the idea. Otherwise a class will soon lack all interest.

There are excellent diagrams in "Economics Simplified" which help in the various explanations. We always suggest that the student purchase both "Progress and Poverty" and "Economics Simplified."

Sometimes triple folding postcards are used to stir up interest in the course and these are sent out to the prospects. A minister in a small town has to be careful against sending out material to other church members. This is one of the complicating factors in spreading the story. After the local church is fairly well educated there are other ways of reaching the townsfolk without seeming to proselyte.

Should you decide to hold a class just write to the Henry George School, 50 East 69th Street, and ask for supplies. Secure a "Teacher's Manual" and use it as little as possible in class. It will serve as a comfortable guide for you and keep you from answering any question wrong. The sooner you can do without it, the better. The School will request the names of your students and will supply Certificates of Graduation at the completion of the course.

If you are willing to make a big all-out effort to blanket your town or city with invitations, these will be supplied and postage for their mailing will be paid. Samples of such invitations may be secured for the asking.

Naturally, I would be happy to serve you in any way that I can, and most cordially invite you to call upon me for help or suggestions at any time.

Batavia, N. Y.