

Moral Reawakening

by OSCAR B. JOHANNSEN

"THE truth that I have tried to make clear will not find easy acceptance. . . . But it will find friends—those who will toil for it; suffer for it; if need be, die for it. This is the power of Truth," said Henry George in the last chapter of *Progress and Poverty*.

And he could well feel confident that it would find friends, for in his day what is now known as the "Protestant ethic" was the dominant standard. It was assumed that men were by nature independent, self-reliant, courageous and willing to fight to overcome obstacles and hardships. It was not surprising that Henry George believed some might be willing to die for principles such as he espoused, and he could reasonably hope that the majority would, at least, be sympathetic to his individualistic philosophy.

But is this true today? According to Richard LaPiere in *The Freudian Ethic*, a perceptive analysis of the decline of the "Protestant ethic" in the 20th Century, our beliefs are now quite different. Men are assumed to be shackled by biological urges which can never be freely expressed so they are in constant conflict with society, ill adapted for the world in which they are born—weak, irresolute and without the stamina to endure the stresses and strains of living. This gives them the excuse to be egocentric and irresponsible.

And wherever we turn we see a depreciation of individual values. Moral standards once recognized as sound guides for living are increasingly questioned. Truth is no longer absolute but relative. Moral precepts are redefined in order to coincide with the desires of those wishing to indulge in the pleasures of the moment; and the

mores which bound a society of independent, responsible people are under pressure. Evidence of this is seen in the appalling increase in crime, violence and degeneracy, and the apathetic tolerance of these evils. The continuous clamor for more privileges from the government and the increasing willingness to foist on it such obligations as the care of the aged, the indigent and the helpless, are additional proofs that the "Freudian ethic" has largely captured men's minds today.

In such a milieu it is hardly likely that Georgism, with its emphasis on individual integrity and responsibility, can grow and prosper. Instead, the danger is great that the philosophy of Henry George will be re-examined by those who do not clearly understand its deeper implications, and will be diluted and reinterpreted in a way that will vitiate the fundamental structure.

A moral and spiritual reawakening is being called for by many who deplore the increase of violence. The Henry George School may not wish to participate in this except insofar as it can aid through the diffusion of Georgist principles, which are really moral principles. The school has naturally and properly followed intellectual lines, but Henry George was more than a fiscal reformer—he became a leader of conviction, vigor and courage, and his life might well be studied by his followers.

This is not so far fetched as it may sound for there is little doubt that sooner or later, as in previous civilizations, men will arise, much like the Biblical prophets, and will exhort people to return to clean living and high standards, when violence and crime have become increasingly repugnant.

Think what an effect a great spiritual leader would have if he understood the land question and would include in his teachings the principles of Henry George! Moses must have been such a man, for Henry George in a brilliant lecture, stated that Moses recognized that the decadence of the Egyptian civilization and the enslavement of the masses were primarily the result of the possession by a small class, of the land on which and from which the people had to live. It may

be that this explains how Moses exerted such tremendous influence on his people.

The reawakening which is surely coming in the not too distant future, calls for men and women of courage. One of the most effective means for propagating Georgism would be to try to influence spiritual leaders to study the land question. Such men might then inspire us to create a truly great society based on justice and equal rights to the sources of all wealth — the land.

The Lure of the Caribbean

Planning a holiday in Jamaica? Philip Wallace, director of the Henry George School in Kingston would like to hear from vacationing Georgists who can give talks before local civic groups explaining land value taxation. Please write to him six weeks before your visit, at 24 Harcourt Road, Kingston 16, Jamaica, W. I.

"You don't have to be a tycoon to establish digs in the Caribbean," according to Walter Wager, who described the island homes of stage and screen celebrities. Quarter acre lots on the Grand Bahama range from \$1950 to \$10,000 — a stone colonial house at Montego Bay (Jamaica) sold recently for \$26,000 with two guest cottages and 39 acres — and handsome

new apartments are available in co-operative buildings in Jamaica and the Virgin Islands at \$12,500 or more. And for "gracious private empires" there are a number of "dandy islands" for as little as \$75,000 or as much as \$1,200,000, complete with dock and perhaps a landing strip or heliport.

If you ever decide to sell you can expect to make a substantial profit. "As the jets lure more people to these splendid islands, property values are almost certain to continue their impressive ascents. Many houses are now going for double what they brought a decade ago, and the prices for complete islands seem destined to zoom even further as wily North American investors spot the potential for additional resort developments.

The Standard, published monthly for many years by Georgists in Australia, has been renamed Good Government. The January number clarified the objective of its publishers, the Henry George Union for Social Justice (NSW), as "the collection by our governments (local and central) of the revenue continuously produced by the community itself, i.e., the site-rents in the centers of population, which in Australia are estimated to amount to over £1,000 millions annually," with no payment for any improvements included in the rent, and a corresponding cancellation of taxation on private incomes, wages and property. "Governments, like individuals, must learn to live on their own incomes," say these experienced Georgists.