

A SEED WAS SOWN: The Life, Philosophy and Writings of Oscar H. Geiger. By Robert Clancy, published by Henry George School of Social Science, New York. 1952. 124 pp. \$1.00.

Probably all of us who have studied at the Henry George School in recent years have heard or read, at one time or another, that it was founded by someone named Oscar Geiger. Students of *The Philosophy of Henry George* know that its author is his son and disciple, George Raymond Geiger. I suspect, though, that many have wondered, as I have, just what manner of man this founding father was. And I believe that all of them will welcome the appearance of Robert Clancy's book.

In his introduction the author remarks that he is presenting just a biographical sketch, but I doubt if his readers will consider that any apology is called for. Surely very few lines have been omitted which are relevant to the picture which he has drawn.

The man who works for something simply because he believes it is right is always an inspiring figure, but never more so than when he knows that he will enjoy little, if any, of the fruit of his effort. As I read I kept thinking of the school which Oscar Geiger brought into being as it is now, less than a score of years after his death. It seemed impossible that it had grown from such humble beginnings in such a short period. "He wouldn't know it if he could see it today!" Not a very original thought, this, and certainly a bromidic expression of it. But it is one which is as true for him as for any creditor of humanity to whom it has seemed worthier to do than to have done, and who has sown for others to reap.

In the second section of the book, devoted to the philosophy of Oscar Geiger, I was reminded repeatedly of another boy who had sought the answers to life's problems in rabbinical studies, and who likewise had left the quiet shadows of the synagogue for a world which was stormier, but where horizons were wider. Again and again I could hear echoes of Baruch de Spinoza. Here was another who had devoted himself to teaching the truth, another seeker who had found that the God of Israel dwelt not only among the clouds on Mount Sinai, nor in the ark of the covenant, but in all creation.

But Oscar Geiger's philosophical feet were never far from the ground. Perhaps the austere rationalism of the Talmud schools its students in logical habits of thought. And while Bob Clancy dutifully calls attention to occasional minor inconsistencies, he is usually able to show that they are due less to faulty reasoning than to lack of terminological precision.

In the writings which occupy the final three chapters, the reader has no difficulty in recognizing a personality whom he has by this time come to know well. There are lectures and letters, but a debate and the answers to a series of questions on practical problems are particularly fine examples of keen, clear thinking. The letters are interesting and frequently very revealing.

It is especially fitting that the story of Oscar Geiger has been told by one of the little group who sat at his feet when his school was still in its infancy, one who, moreover, has been intimately associated with its work ever since.

Robert Clancy was truly qualified to write this book, and he should be as proud of it as his many friends will be of him.

—MARSHALL CRANE