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"AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER"

IN LIGHT OF THE CHRISTIAN ETHIC

by

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A discussion of the Christian Ethic may throw light on the subject, "Am I My Brother's Keeper?". While I believe in fair competition, my first bucket spills with liquid poison on the "jungle ethic of competition", and pours out from the other hand, balm in favor of the Christian Ethic for scientific, social economics.

Our social order lifts its head from the sight of two global wars. It makes unquestioned and violent drafts upon precious human beings and labor, and takes its toll. Between 1914 and 1957 the western-eastern world looms in our minds. The present social order is whistling to keep up courage, is tottering and crumbling, while tariffs and taxes eat away our lives and our freedom. Nations that have tread the paths of mere acquisitiveness and the instinct of aggression, by far-reaching drama, have proved again and again that war and present economics hold to a half-moral philosophy and ethic that only the fittest brute shall survive. This habit and order do not meet the pragmatic test of time. It has no security and endurance except for the privileged and royal, and now these tremble in fear.

There is another ethic that endures for ever, says Paul of Tarsus. It is the Christian Ethic which practices every-day living by love and faith in God. It is willing to share all natural resources with all mankind. Its first and last regard of value is the worth of personality. The individual is most important. Equal and fair access to Mother Earth is necessary for the proper development of individual personality. Such equal and fair access to land is man's natural birth-right. Now, to be sure, this ethic of love is at a low ebb and flow in our times. Consequently, man says of his brothers that the whole hoi poloi is degenerate and barbarous. Why should he feel that he is his brother's keeper? Is this not a world in which dog eats dog? Even though the social order crackles and crumbles, the first dog had better eat or die, in this jungle ethic of cut-throat competition. Darwin's biological science falsely teaches that the fittest animal only is determined by natural law to survive. Malthus gives a false economic formula in saying that the human race increases geometrically, by doubling each generation, while productivity of the land produces merely arithmetically, and not enough to feed the new offsprings. History and experience prove that both these theories are false. The human race has never increased, except in small areas at certain times, geometrically on earth, and the land resources are able to produce thousands of times more than is needed by mankind. Nature and creation, i.e., the providence of God, are bountiful beyond compare, and this concept is of a new economic science.

He who applies mental and bodily energies, toils day or night, constitutes no small measure of humanity's blood-power and soul-stuff. Co-ordination of natural and spiritual resources, adequate opportunity for all people, is still a dream. But the dream could become real in experience and practice, speedily and

gradually. The Christian Ethic is a dream that furnishes man with the only hard-headed facts in the world for plenty instead of poverty. Once the air plane was a dream of this ethic, once bread to the Mayflower settlers in New England was a dream; then in the hands of a young man named Charles Lindbergh a plane flew from the American shores and landed in France. In the spirit and energy of New England producers food and houses multiplied. This is real fruit of dreams.

Dreams are they--
That white man shall call black man brother,
That greed shall pass from the market place,
That lust shall yield to love for the race,
Dreams are they all--
But shall we despise them--
God's dreams!

Intelligent people seek, not the jungle ethic of barbarous and pessimistic hue, but the upward look of a creative ethic of love. Thinkers are beginning to see that the bounties of land for the common-day man can be more productive for distribution and use than our dreams have hitherto observed. This economic concept of abundance shows that land belongs to all the people of the nations and not to individual speculators in lands. This plan dethrones classic socialism and imperialism with their systems of scarcity for the unfavored majority. Socialism's theory of man's needs is based on a mechanistic, state-controlled "bread-line" type of production and distribution; it destroys the individual and his freedom to work and produce for himself; it places man as a mere cog in the wheel of state and militarism, and stifles the abounding energies and ability of the individual and thus of human society. Socialism in its classic idea and plan is damning to labor, withholds land and natural resources from the people's free use of it, and links a static economy with dictatorial stateism. Labor unions, with all their blessings, need to see that they readily fall heir to this stateism. Labor needs to restudy the fact that it can become free with plenty only by equal and fair use of land resources, and by collecting taxes from land resources rather than from labor and labor's improvements.

In turn the church stands under moral judgment. It has blessed more than blasted the false concepts of economics and the present social order. It has not reprovved land speculation nor the tortuous taxation of labor. It has forgotten that God created the earth for man, never sold an inch to any man or speculator, and said "all these things God knows ye have need of." The church has preached brotherhood and at the same time does nothing or little to restore one resource basic to man's being brother to man--land, natural resources. When Jesus said, "Man cannot live by bread alone", He was not denying that man does live also by bread. Therefore, both the church and state, unwittingly we suppose, have been in league with socialism and a way of life that enslaves man and does not set him free. Shall church and state continue to be Cains in the Old Testament, or Abels who worship God and allow for free production and equality in the land? The New Testament Gospel rings through and through with freedom from slavery, from want and paganism. It promises plenty for body and abundance for soul to all who live and labor in the faith of God and the ethic of love.

Most public schools and universities have not presented the economic and scientific view of production with the equitable use of land. The schools make theorists as Reverend Malthus and Alexander Hamilton basic references for departments of economics and sociology. Most departments of Psychology and Religion have not dug into the wealth of knowledge we find in the Georgian thought. The average man reads little or nothing about the real reasons for depressions, wars

and starvation. Statesmen and big business seem satisfied to keep the people blind to facts. Profit and riches to the few, gobbling up of land and natural resources with more and more taxes upon the poor, seem to be the style for our day. Where are the wide-awake thinkers, prophets and priests of justice and plenty?

Would you like some observations and quotations? Great reforms, changes and progress always come by men and women who dare to think, and to express thought in action. Why not blast outworn concepts as this, "Honesty is the best policy." This is a false concept, paralyzing to religion and economics. To be honest is vital and the first law of any ethical economy; but it is not a cure-all because justice may be left out. To pay a debt under a system, where in the land 65 per cent of the people live and work on less than 1 per cent of the land, as in the United States, is acting honestly as to the status quo but is this honest act productive of justice? No, for 35 per cent have gobbled up the land by speculation and live sumptuously while most go in want because they never had a chance to use land fairly. Land speculators will administer their sites honestly as to community standards, selling and buying land which never was theirs by justice of nature. Another stultifying concept is this: "Be patient and practice tolerance." If a thing cannot be wholly accepted why tolerate it? Does not toleration too often become hypocrisy? Would Abraham Lincoln have freed the Negro citizens by such concept? Another serious but dogmatic fallacy is one often held regarding government: "Let the powers that be decide the taxes." Even when Paul wrote this idea in his letter to Roman Christians, he assumed that the "powers that be" were Christian-spirited. Why should the citizens suffer the "powers that be" to place taxes on labor, on products of labor, on wages and more indirect taxes? When will the powers ever put the tax on the land rental values rather than the consumer? The power, thus to tax well may destroy. Oliver Wendell Holmes, former U.S. Supreme Court Justice, bears out the idea when speaking thus: "Taxes...whatever form they take in their imposition must be borne by the consumer, that is, mainly by the working men of the community." As it is, taxation obstructs production at the source, takes buying power from the consumer, starves populations and brings burdens. The indirect cause of Jesus Christ being born in a stable in a town with poor housing was the taxation laid upon the people, by the decree of Caesar Augustus. Up to the early part of the eleventh century, landlords paid 95 per cent of all taxes, but then they succeeded in freeing their land-holdings from taxation-- and the state and church lost an opportunity. How true was William Shakespeare: "You do take my life when you do take the means by which I live."

Have you read from the Holy Bible God's doctrines of the land for us? Here is a basic: "The land shall not be sold forever." Lev. 16.23. When Jesus comforted and inspired burdened people in Matthew, He assumed, as often He made great assumptions before He taught, that man has free access to the use of land, and said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness...for God knows ye have need of these other things." And "these other things" in the context refer to fruits and produce of the land; for He has just said that God feeds the birds of the air and clothes them, will He not much more care for you. "The earth hath He given to the children of men." God gave the Garden of Eden (the earth), and has never since sold an inch or taken it away. That Adam (man) was cursed by God to till the soil is a concept that is taken to be an absurdity by leading theologians. This is beautiful from the Bible, "And ye shall inherit the land, one as well as another." Lev. 20. "They shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them." 2 Kings. No wonder Henry George wrote, in his classic entitled, "Progress and Poverty", that man can never be free until he can have free land.

The American Indian had more of the ethic of love than many of us. Chief Black Hawk, of the Sac and Fox Tribe, said: "My reason teaches me that the land cannot be sold. The Great Spirit gave it to his children to live on, and so long as they occupy it and cultivate it, they have a right to the soil." From a New Zealand Maori: "The white man sends missionaries to us, very good, fine people, and they tell us to look up to heaven, but while we are looking up, other Pahika (white men) come and take the land from under our feet."

Thomas Jefferson, who was recognized the wisest educated man of his day in the United States, said: "The earth is given for a common stock for men to labor and live on." To him more than to any other American, we owe our grounds of basic democracy and freedom to think. He was the first to blast Alexander Hamilton's theory of Federal practice which allowed taxation, and left its best fruits only to the well-born and aristocratic. It seems that Old Abe Lincoln owed most of his economic and political fundamentals to Jefferson. Lincoln said: "The land, the earth, God gave to man for his home, sustenance and support, should never be in the possession of any man, corporation, society or unfriendly government any more than air or water, if as much." No wonder Wall Street speculators favored a pistol that fired a ball to crush his heart in a Washington theatre, while many blamed the Confederates, tho blameworthy they also be. Did you know that speculators associated with Wall Street would not support the war for union federation, until Lincoln was forced to give them miles and miles of western belts of land which was paved with crude and shoddy railroads?

For those who dared to teach the truth, we shall never be too thankful. The world needs men and women with courage and morals, or else the day will come when we all shall stalk as ghosts and starve! While the church indifferently has failed to inform, encouraged indirectly sale of indulgencies to members to save face and get revenue, as much as the Pope when Luther rebelled in 1517, let us give credit where credit is due and blame where blame is due. There have been noteworthy exceptions among the clergy and Christian leaders, who have stood by the ethic of love and full use of the land by man. Reverend W. W. Young, a Presbyterian minister in New York State, believed that Applied Christianity has been halted by not being educated in the true economics of the land and its resources. He made ten lectures and formed them available to us.

To my amazement and gratification, recently I found that the Anglican Arch Bishop of York, lately deceased, Dr. William Temple, who is regarded by Christendom as wise and profound, stated: "A profiteer in land value after the war should be considered a traitor...I hope it may be made effectively illegal (this profiteering)...for which any man ought to be turned out of a decent Club." The author, after preaching so, had the sad experience to see his wealthiest man leave the congregation. He merely preached: "Why should a man, as I have in my note, in California, profit from oil wells to the extent of \$300,000,000 while the community suffers, getting little or none of the returns of that land? Let us not kid ourselves. Russia is not free, Hungary is struggling to be free to use land, and the United States is not free because she is bound by land speculation and taxes upon the products of labor and labor's blood. Not many can hope to buy land, even if right, to build upon in these new suburban communities, for speculators ride the saddle, and only the privileged can afford to venture or invest. The earth is the Lord's and fullness thereof, and all that dwell therein, writes Psalmist 24. Father McGlyn was cited for excommunication for proclaiming the evil injustice of land value speculations, then exonerated by the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church.

Poets like David Thoreau, Walt Whitman and Markham have given lines to the tune of right use of land. One great novelist, Hamlin Garland, writes convincingly in favor of land value and land being accessible to all who live on it. His novel, "Shores Acres", was drama played a long time in the country with remarkable success.

The late Honorable Lloyd George, Premier of Great Britain, wrote: "The time will come when the question will be asked, why should thirty thousand citizens of England own all England, while thirty million Englishmen are trespassers in the land of their birth?" Who knew that, against injustice of private monopoly of land, Winston Churchill years ago wrote: "It is quite true that land monopoly is not the only monopoly which exists, but it is by far the greatest...This sort of thing is detrimental to the general welfare." Bernard Shaw, though he once lived in an aristocratic house, wrote: "The monstrous absurdity of private appropriation of the peoples ground rent!" Oliver Goldsmith sadly sang: "A time there was, ere England's woes began, when every rood of land maintained its man." Count Leo Tolstoy, though acting differently and atheistically later, said: "The land is common to all; all have the same right to it." And, believe it or not, that stalwart Republican Teddy Roosevelt said: "The burden of municipal taxation should be so shifted as to put the weight of taxation upon the enearned rise in the value of land itself, rather than upon improvements." Thus, tax upon products of labor should not be, and this is the thought of the Georgian School. The great prophets of old, the Man of Galilee, and these clergy and layleaders quoted have spoken in favor of the Georgist philosophy and plan of solution to bring mankind up from starvation to plenty.

How do you speak? What will we feel and do? Is it not more likely that those who follow the school, which provides access to land by all who live on the land and places taxes on land sources, shall be in the train with the Godly? Why not for the thrill of being in right to speak, teach and write -- and let the selfish roar, while the light falls upon those who know not the light? If we are entirely of the calm, pacific nature, why not write dramas and newsletters to shed forth the light to the public? Move out. Be the fool for right or the foiler to wrong. Georgists every where have moved forward, and they need the support of the beginner and of the mature. Our hearts are all on the same side; our house undivided is to be built. St. Paul, it seems, is with us as he writes to the Romans: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God unto salvation to all that believe...first to the Jew then to the Greek"...to all humanity who live on the land.

"Am I my brother's keeper?" No, if my answer is with the prophet or swindler of the jungle ethic, whose ilk run rife in the land. Yes, if we accept the ethic of love and land value. The master of the ethic was Jesus, born in a stable because taxation upon the labor and builder was so great under Caesar that houses for a mother could not be had. This Boy who became Christ, responding to the educated questioner, "who is my neighbor?" did not answer directly. He focused the question more deeply. Looking at the Samaritan dragged and robbed and hurt, Jesus said: "Not who but how is my neighbor." The how of the people is the secret. To take the land from people is to make the how of living into a state of poverty. To give man his right by birth is to let him do well by the use and production of the land. Are brothers doing with land values what God wants brothers to do? Edwin Markham, a hundred years ago wrote, "The Man with the Hoe." He inspires our thought:

Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burdon of the world.
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
Stolid and stumped, a brother to the ox?
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

Is this the thing the Lord God made and gave
To have dominion over sea and land;
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;
To feel the passion of eternity?

How answer his brute question in that hour
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake all shores?
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings--
With those who shaped him to the thing he is--
When the dumb Terror shall rise to judge the world,
After the silonce of the centuries?

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