

the despair and wildness which spring up in the hearts of the poor when legal force, like a sharp harrow, goes over the most sensitive and vital rights of mankind. All this is contained in the land question."

And in new lands, with untold natural wealth and opportunities, we see rising poverty, chronic unemployment, the struggle to make ends meet, anxiety about the morrow, the dread of coming social convulsions.

These fruits all arise from ignoring the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, and righteousness in legislation. Instead, we enthrone theft. Largely unconscious theft, it is true, for as in old times, men "have eyes and see not, and ears and hear not." But to those whose eyes are becoming opened to the great wrong casting its baleful shadow over all the world, the call is made to enter into this New Crusade, this "Holy War," to finally settle the land question.

Those who, understanding this wrong, shirk facing it, and, instead, advocate charity and other palliatives, are opposing Christ's teachings by not seeking first righteousness. Those only are the true men of faith who believe that in first seeking righteousness, all other things necessary for man's welfare shall be added. And the storms came, "and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock."

LET ALL CHRISTIANS THEN UNITE WITH THE HENRY GEORGE MEN IN THEIR WORLD-WIDE CRUSADE. THE EARTH IS THE BIRTHRIGHT OF ALL MANKIND. THE RENT OF LAND BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE. THE FIRST DUTY OF GOVERNMENT IS TO COLLECT IT AND ABOLISH ALL TAXATION. THAT IS TO SUBSTITUTE A NATIONAL LAND RENT FOR OUR PRESENT TAXATION.

NOTE.

It is interesting to see how Henry George's teachings conform with Matt. xvii. 27, when taken as a parable. The laws of political economy are there in a nutshell. Christ (rendering service) instructs Peter (labor) to cast his hook (capital) into the sea (natural opportunity—land), and to draw out a fish (wages). He obtains in addition a coin (an increment—rent) with which to meet the Government's demand for revenue.

Should the reader desire copies of "Christianity and Henry Georgism," or further information on the principles underlying the Land Question, he may obtain same at the Office of the Henry George League, George Parade, (off 111 Collins Street), Melbourne.

Contributions towards further printing and distributing this leaflet may be addressed to F. T. Hodgkiss, 277 William Street, Melbourne.

Renwick Pride, Melbourne

Christianity And Henry Georgism

A Call to a Great Crusade

The Land Question



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Christianity and Henry Georgism

Dissatisfaction, deep and wide, prevails concerning our social conditions; and many panaceas abound which look to artificial arrangements to remedy the wrongs acknowledged to exist.

Certain reformers hold that while Christianity is a personal matter, it is also something more; that the evils that attend civilisation arise from disregard of Christian principles in legislation; and that, despite all legislative artifices, social troubles will continue until legal enactments are brought into harmony with Christ's teachings. That until this be done civilisation is building its "house upon the sand."

They also maintain there is only one programme of economic and social reform, the one laid down by Henry George, that is in conformity with Christian principles. That it will bear analysis from every aspect of the Christian faith; and that in working for its world-wide acceptance all Christians can, and should, unite.

Further, that on those who would be "doers of the Word, and not hearers only," no more important duty rests than to concentrate their energies to secure through public education changes in our legislation to bring it into conformity with the principles Christ laid down for our social guidance; for true Christians not only pray "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth," but work for the coming of the Kingdom.

Once let all Christians unite in a great crusade to carry out a common programme based upon righteous principles, and the hoary, entrenched wrongs, secure as they now stand against the philosophic attacks of the few, would speedily be swept away confronted with an army fired with religious zeal; bent not upon compromise but on fearlessly carrying out what it believed to be God's will.

Certain principles laid down by Christ aid us in getting clear views on the relationship between Christianity and the social problem and its solution.

Addressing the multitudes and His disciples, He said: "All ye are brethren, and One is your Father, which is in heaven."

From the Fatherhood of God He deduced the love of God to all men, extending to the provision of their material needs, "For He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

From the Brotherhood of Man Christ taught that universal brotherliness should exist between men: that we should love not only those who love us in return, but all men. So great a stress

did He put upon this that He laid down that our Father is far more concerned as to our relationships between ourselves, than He is to the worship we pay Him. While our brother has aught against us, He does not desire our presence at the altar. "First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." He will pardon us only as we pardon others. Lip service is treated with scorn. The makers of long prayers who rob widows' houses shall receive the greater damnation; while in service to our fellow-man Christ sees the highest service. "Come, ye blessed of My Father; inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren ye have done it unto Me."

Nothing is clearer than Christ's attitude towards and remedy for the social problem. "What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" He taught in the first place, our Father knoweth we have need of all these things. He who has provided for the fowls of the air and clothed the grass of the field, how much more shall He clothe and feed us, the very hairs of whose head are numbered.

Accepting Christ's teachings as to the abundance of God's gifts to man we may rest assured it is not from lack of His bounty that social distress exists.

But if He, knowing our frame, has so abundantly provided for our needs, how is it so many lack the good things of life? Why this widespread anxiety about the morrow? If the natural wants of all are so generously provided for, how is it that large numbers cannot get them adequately satisfied?

Christ's reply is: Were righteousness enthroned in our midst, these evils would not exist. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." If social distress is here it is our fault, not the Creator's; and the remedy is the establishment of righteousness, or right relations between man and man. And here lies the test as to who are the true reformers. "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness."

Righteousness is the condition of living and acting according to right and justice. Of the "Kingdom of God" we read, "A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy Kingdom." It is the state of "loving righteousness and hating iniquity," or, in-equity. It means God's will being done on earth; His laws, which cover the whole of life, being obeyed. This is what Christ demands—not a mere formality. Unless our "righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees," observing the forms and letter of religion and not the spirit, He has only denunciations for it.

We clearly see that Christ's teachings lay down these principles, the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man; and that all our

material needs will be satisfied if we seek first the Kingdom of God, i.e., the fulfilment of God's laws in the establishment of right relations between men.

On these identical propositions are Henry George's principles based. He recalled to the world that our Father, Who knows our needs, has not forgotten us. "The earth hath He given to the children of men," wherefrom all may satisfy their needs. As He provides for the ravens, so has He provided for us. Not by putting the food into our mouths, but by providing the natural opportunities for sustenance, accompanied with the injunction, "Go work in My vineyard."

Now if God has provided the earth for the equal use of all, surely the duty of all, especially of those who call themselves "Christians," and profess to believe we should love our neighbours as ourselves, is to examine whether society secures to all the equal right to the use of this gift. If it does not, then the Fatherhood of God over all is ignored, and the Brotherhood of Man is rendered a mockery.

Alas! that this condition does everywhere exist in so-called "Christian" lands, and that so many "Christians" are dumb on the matter. While the birds have nests and the foxes have holes, to-day in our civilisation are multitudes of dispossessed human beings who have not where to lay their heads, except by paying Land Rent to other human beings.

We see the best parts of the earth—to which all have equal rights, for God has no favourites, He charges no rent—held by a select few. The others exist here by sufferance, not by right; only through payment made by them for permission to obtain access to their own inheritance. With no right except upon the highway, and there having ever to move on; on every hand meeting the signs "To Let" or "For Sale"; in their need to use the earth, men see themselves shut out, unless they have the means to bribe a fellow-creature, with no more right than themselves to be there; to stand out of the way. We pray, "Hallowed be Thy Name," the Name of "Father," but is it hallowed when we uphold such conditions as these? "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

Here then, on the very threshold, we find unrighteousness, a denial of human brotherhood in the equal right to share in the Father's gift to all.

Henry George shows that if our civilisation is to continue, this most glaring anomaly so inconsistent with the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, our unjust system of landholding, must be swept away. That unless our land laws be brought into harmony with God's will, nothing can save our civilisation from being overwhelmed in disaster.

To be righteous our land laws must be based upon these principles:—We all have equal right to the use of the earth, including the best parts. We cannot all have equal access to, and the use of, the superior land. Only some can. They therefore enjoy an advantage at the expense of their fellows. This cannot be justly granted, and held, without due recompense to those excluded from such extra advantage. To maintain Brotherhood it must be established that the extra advantage derived by some in possessing relatively better land, shall be shared in by all. This can be done by each landholder handing over for the use of the whole community all value coming to him through superior natural productiveness or situation above that enjoyed by his less favoured brethren.

This relative advantage always shows itself in the value of one piece of land as compared with another, excluding improvements made by the landholder, and constitutes the rental value of land. This land rent exists quite apart from the individual effort of the landholder. It rises and falls with the presence and needs of the community. Every child born, every immigrant, every social development, is reflected in ground rent.

The most equitable way for the community to share in this natural income is to use it to defray all communal expense. With this national rental revenue appropriated to meet social needs all our present taxation upon private property, with its many evil incidences, could be entirely abolished. Thus all would be relieved from taxation, and all would share in the land rent they jointly create.

Here, then, is the righteous and practical solution of the land question. Not by dividing up the land, a clumsy device, meaning the giving of much bad land of little value, to equalise the holding by another of a little good land of much value; not by unjust schemes of purchase, and land nationalisation; but by abolishing taxation and sharing as brothers in the value or rent of land.

In George's words, "We would simply take for the community what belongs to the community—the value that attaches to land by the growth of the community, and leave sacredly to the individual all that belongs to the individual." We now largely reverse this process. The individual takes what belongs to the community. The community takes what belongs to the individual.

Relative values exist in land owing to differences in natural advantages. But not only does the act of the Creator render some land more productive and valuable than other land; so also do the concentration of population and the joint outlay and enterprise of the community. Wealth is far more easily produced where men assemble, where railways converge, roads meet, docks exist, elec-

tricity, gas and water are laid on, than where population is sparse and none of these advantages exist.

This ever-increasing wealth, due to social developments, tends to constantly increase private incomes from land rent. While the returns to labour and capital, in wages and interest, remain ever much the same, the price of land in cities is seen to rise in the course of years from a few pounds per foot frontage to even thousands of pounds per foot. Land prices keep pace with social development, and thus a landed aristocracy arises, a purely consuming, parasitical class, ever increasing its land rent charges for land, that not the "owners," but the people as a whole, are making more and more valuable. Thus is society progressively robbed as its earnings increase.

On the other hand, society, instead of obtaining its revenue from the right quarters, carries out the iniquitous, unrighteous plan of stealing from individuals. What men produce by their labour is as much theirs against the State as against any individual. Ignoring its duty to take its own income—awaiting rightful appropriation—the State takes from men their personal possessions, and the result of their individual labours. It is doing this every day under our system of income taxes, death duties, taxes upon imports, production, consumption, etc.

Society in its corporate capacity is guilty of theft. It steals in the completest manner—Passively: notwithstanding that its function is to see justice observed, in acting through its laws as an accomplice, by enabling landholders to take that to which they have no right. Actively: in taking that to which it itself has no right.

Christ's teaching when questioned on the subject of taxation, to "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's," conveys that there is that which is the distinct property of Caesar, which Caesar—the State—has produced, and therefore has right to claim. All those appropriating to themselves land values, or land rent, are robbing the State. Christ does not teach men should render unto Caesar the things that are their own. The State, in levying tribute upon private property, is robbing every member of the community.

We thus see that our social fabric is honeycombed through with theft. In the guilt of this all share who, having been shown, and understanding, this wrong, are not straining every effort by spreading the truth to bring it to an end.

Along with other evils which persist from this immoral, unrighteous, un-Christian condition, there exists our ever-present "unemployment problem."

The holders of land to-day are legally empowered to prevent others having access thereto unless they pay a purchase price, or rental, which the holders consider satisfactory to themselves. The

result is land speculation on a large scale. Valuable land, unused, or inadequately used, meets us everywhere. The fact that it has a value shows it would be of service to somebody. That it is unused shows its price is prohibitive to that potential land user. Unemployed valuable land means unemployed men.

The evil effects of land speculation are manifold. Artificially created land scarcity creates fictitious land values, and thus enhances the rent of all land, making it a struggle for tenants to meet abnormal land rents. And the keeping of land of value out of use "waiting for a rise," besides causing unemployment with its innumerable consequent ills, through this unemployment causes constant unrest among those working, in their struggle to maintain wages and otherwise hold their own.

Unless this curse of allowing irresponsible persons to withhold the gifts of God from others for mercenary motives is made to end, unless men are put upon an equality in their relation to the use of the earth, the ever-rising floods of social discontent will at last overwhelm our civilisation, and history will include our story with that of other civilisations that have fallen through social injustice. The storms "beat upon that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it."

Christianity has no respect for legal rights which conflict with righteousness. It asks, Where are Christ's followers in allowing without opposition such to exist? It calls upon them, in seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, to unitedly work for the abolition of all man-made laws in conflict with the spirit of justice and brotherhood. Every immoral, unrighteous act on our statute books is a scandal to Christendom; all the more scandalous because all men share in the guilt of injustice legally done. Whereas, injustice done without warrant of law is individual sin.

We see in land rent a divine law operating. We see a wonderful, prescient provision for the social needs of the community. As society grows it grows with it, to bless it. On the other hand, experience shows how ever-encroaching taxation blights society as a cancer.

Christ asks, "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" Even so a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. Man has no power, nor charm, to avert the operation of natural, i.e., divine, law. Already we see land monopoly ripening in newly-settled lands.

What its fruits are in old lands, Cardinal Manning stated:—"The land question means hunger, thirst, nakedness, notices to quit, labour spent in vain, the toil of years seized upon, the breaking up of houses, the misery, sickness, death of parents, children, wives,