

LAND.*(For the Review.)*By **JOHN ARCHER.***

Land! How easily and glibly the word falls from the lips! It is a word of so simple a nature as to be embraced within the vocabulary of the youngest child who has mastered the first rudiments of its mother tongue, and yet it has a fullness of meaning for men the significance of which is imperfectly grasped by but few—even of the most learned.

What is land? Land is not merely a commodity of solid earth which men can see and take hold of, but is something much more. Earth without the beneficent operations of other elements is useless matter, but given the co-operation of these factors, earth at once becomes invested with life-giving and life-sustaining properties. These elements are light, air and water. Thus the term land must at all times be understood to embrace all natural elements.

Not this only, however. The full significance of land in its relationship to human life can only be grasped when we remember that land is the gift of the Creator, that it is limited in quantity, that it can neither be moved nor hid, and that it is necessary for the life of every child born into the world. Man with all his achievements can no more add to or take from this limited supply of land than he can add a foot to his stature, and since this same creative force which we call God has made man, and in making man has made him a land animal—that is to say, has made land necessary to man's existence—it logically follows that He has made land for all men, that all men have equal rights to and in the use thereof. How otherwise can human life be sacred, and be the crown of the Creator's handiwork?

That human life is the most sacred thing in the world, all civilizations are agreed, and recognition of this claim has been enforced by every form of government under which men live, from the time of Moses, the Jewish law-giver, down to the present day.

But if human life be sacred, and if the command "Thou shalt not kill" is not to be violated, does it not follow that no individual and no class shall ever be given the power to deny to another individual or to another class that access to, and consequently the use of, land which is the one vital necessity wherewith to sustain and perpetuate the existence of every individual life?

* This article is from the pen of an English mill-worker, who is without the advantages of what we call "education." Yet there are few men in England capable of writing such eloquent and appealing prose. Mr. Archer is a sample of the men whom Albion is raising up as valiant forces in the war for the coming righteousness, and by the magic of a great truth endowed with extraordinary powers of expression.—Editor **SINGLE TAX REVIEW.**

Man and land being the creation of the same force, the man being dependent upon the use of these divinely created elements in order to continue existence, it follows that this creative force which we call God has devised laws which must be put into operation to secure the right and just relationships of all men in the use of this natural bounty, this natural birthright. God must have willed such a law for men's guidance, and it is man's duty to discover and apply it, for until such a law becomes operative in the lives of men, it is impossible for justice to exercise her functions in men's inter-relationships, and until justice prevails and is established it is obviously impossible for God's purposes to be realized, for though justice may not be the greatest virtue in the moral hierarchy, it is most assuredly the first virtue, and only by it and through it shall finer and greater virtues be possible of attainment.

What then is this law of justice? It must be a law which shall establish the right of every individual to equal co-heirship in the use of the Father's bounty, or how otherwise can we claim that God is the Father of all men? Such a law must then deny the right of any man to claim land as private property!

What is the title which enables any individual to say of any possession—"This is mine, mine against the whole world, and which to take from me without my free consent, is to inflict injustice upon me, is to be guilty of breaking the command 'Thou shalt not steal.' " There can be but one title which will enable any individual to so test his claim of possession, and it is: (1) That such possession shall be the product of his own labor, or of labor which he has bought and paid for, or (2) That such possession shall be his either by gift from or purchase from some other person who has fulfilled the first condition. Can any person before such a test defend the private possession of land, and the appropriation of its tangible values in the shape of rent?

By simple illustration, we may see that private appropriation of these tangible land values cannot be defended before moral law, not even by those who benefit by appropriation.

Two persons whom we will call Brown and Jones have respectively invested their savings. Brown is a cloth manufacturer and builds a mill. In this mill he puts the latest machinery, he buys raw material and engages a staff of work people to make this material into cloth, which Brown succeeds in selling on a large or small scale. He thus crystalizes his original wealth by his own labor—supplemented by the labor for which he has paid in wages to his workmen, into still greater wealth, and is able to say of this wealth, "This is mine against the whole world, and none can take it from me without violation of moral law." Jones on the other hand has invested in land. He too finds that he has been enriched by his investment, but how and by whom? He has bought land in a growing town, whose municipal administration is marked by commendable enterprise. This municipal authority has provided the town with a splendid service of trains, its water, gas and electric supplies are of first rank, while its efforts in promoting

the health and physical well-being of the community rank second only to its own record in ministering to the intellectual and moral development of its people. Such enterprise of the municipality, supplemented as it is by natural advantages of situation, combine to make the town an ideal centre for industrial activities, and its population quickly increases. Populations, however, desire to be housed, and Jones finds that through no effort of his own the land he has purchased is daily rising in value. Possession of desirable site values enables him to reap the productive values of municipal enterprise, and of the growing land hunger which is the outcome of the people's presence and their industrial activities. Can he, like Brown, say of his increased wealth—which the holding of this land has brought his way—"It is mine against the whole world, for it is the price of my own labor, and of labor which I have purchased by the payment of wages."

Obviously, he can say no such thing. On the contrary he is compelled to admit that his increased wealth represents a power he has purchased which has enabled him to gather where he strewed not, and to reap where he never scattered. By investing his money in land he has purchased a power to demand a toll upon the labors of his fellow men, and to appropriate wholly those tangible values which accrue to the lands through the presence, the industrial activities, and the social expenditure of the community. Reduced to plain language he has bought the power to violate the command—"Thou shalt not steal." Give to every man that which is sacredly his own is a sound moral maxim, but it requires to be fully understood. To give to every man that which is sacredly his own must of necessity mean giving to the community that which sacredly belongs to the community, and if this be done it is clear that the power of Jones to reap that which is not the produce of his labor or of labor for which he has paid, but which is due to the presence, the activity and the social expenditure of the people as a community, and therefore belongs religiously and sacredly to the community—must be stopped before we can ever have either individual or social justice.

What methods then may we adopt in order to promote justice? What are the functions of government, either local or national? The making and administering of laws and of conducting the various public and social services which are requisite in the ramifications of a government's life and activities. Yes, but the ideal of any government in the exercise of its functions should and must be to promote the absolute equality of all its citizens before the law, and to secure for each an environment in which it shall be possible for the highest and noblest qualities in each individual life to grow and develop to full attainment and fruition. Such idealism in the exercise of governmental functions is impossible unless it is permeated with and moulded upon the teachings of the world's greatest teacher—the carpenter of Nazareth.

In that teaching man is given guidance not only for his individual acts but for his social relationships, guidance not only for his aspirations and ambitions as a unit, but also guidance for the conduct of the individual in his corporate capacity as a citizen, for what is government either local or national, but the individual crystallized in his corporate capacity?

How are governments elected? By men in the exercise of their citizenship, and men in the exercise of their citizenship are actuated by what? By their political allegiances! And what are politics? What—but the science of government, the making and unmaking of laws, laws under which men must live, to which they must conform and render obedience? And yet some people regard politics as merely a game which is unworthy the thought of serious men. Others regard politics as being nothing more than a struggle between the ins and the outs, between the haves and the have-nots. Seldom indeed do men seek—before their conscience and under the guidance of their religious beliefs—to know what is their bounden duty as citizens in this all-important sphere. Why is this? Is it not because their religious teachers have discountenanced the association of religion and politics as though the one could be divorced from the other, and the results are at once disastrous and well nigh beyond repair. What is the office of religion unless it be to provide men with an absolute rule of right in all their relationships, in the home, the church, the shop, the factory, the exchange, the mart, the court-house, the council chamber, and above all in the legislature? If true religion had never been divorced from politics would it have been possible to enact laws which give as a perquisite to a class that which is the birthright of the nation, would it have been possible to grant to a province or a sect that which is the prerogative of the whole people? Most assuredly no. Christ, the head of the Christian religion, has given us guidance not only for individual conduct but also for our inter-relationships. His commands, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," and "Do ye unto others as ye would have them do unto you," are capable of as full and as grand an interpretation in the social life of a people as they can be in the life of the individual unit, for what is the science of politics but my duty to my neighbor?

Will any man who is truly the disciple of Jesus Christ dare to seek any advantage over his brother through the operation of the laws under which they both must live? Can any man who professes Christ be true to the command of his master to do unto others as he would have others do unto himself and yet seek to establish laws upon the statute book which create privileges for a class and correlatively deny common justice to the remainder of God's family of human beings. Common sense and honesty alike condemn the man who would maintain such a position. And yet how many thousands there are who do claim to be earnest and honest disciples of the Nazarene, who are on the side of privilege, of invested interests, and of those who would and do hold as a monopoly the very gift of God. Do unto other as ye would that others should do unto you! How can any man subscribe to this teaching, and yet range himself on the side of men and parties who have made and who are perpetuating the very creation of God into the private property of a few? How can men subscribe to this doctrine who yet take advantage and who seek to perpetuate such advantage as enables them to reap the fruits of another's toil and to appropriate the wealth they have not earned and which is not produced by human labor or by individual enterprise?

In the Book of Life we are told that the profits of the earth are for all, and we are further told to render to Caesar the things which are Caesar's, but few Christians are ready to obey such commands in the distribution of wealth, and yet without conformity to these commands the realization of their prayer, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" is impossible, and their prayers are vain, for they are a petition of the lips and not of the heart. For when that kingdom is established on earth there will be none therein who shall inhabit the houses another builds, and none therein shall eat the fruits of the vine which is of another's planting and tending. In that kingdom all men shall justify their existence by the sweat of their own brow and not by the sweat of another's, which is but another way of saying that no man shall be able to possess anything of which he is unable to say: "This is mine, it is the product of my own labor or of labor for which I have paid."

How then shall this New Jerusalem be ushered into being, how shall God's kingdom on earth be established? How otherwise than by just laws? By men ceasing to enact laws which give privilege to the few and inflict injustice upon many. By enacting laws which will bring to an end the power of individuals to appropriate that to which they have no moral title, by giving to the community that which sacredly belongs to the community and leaving sacred to the individual that which rightly belongs to him. How can such reforms be established? Is there a way to secure this end? There is. Let the whole basis of our tax and taxing systems be remodelled and placed upon a true ethical basis. Taxation may be used either to create and entrench monopolies and privileges or to destroy them. Taxation may be used either to promote freedom and spread the cause of liberty or it may be used to engender and promote the growth of tyranny and repression. Taxation may be used either to promote the removal of fundamental wrongs or to perpetuate them. This being the case it is obvious that therein lies the beginnings of reforms which will promote the operations of justice and which will assist in making men equal before the law.

Today it is established beyond refutation that all unimproved value in land is value which accrues to land from the presence, the industry and the social expenditure of the people as a community. This then is a natural source of wealth which justice and morality alike decree shall be taken by the community in the way of rates and taxes. What would be the effect of appropriating this socially-created wealth for social needs instead of—as now—allowing it to filter into the pockets of individuals?

(1) Transfer of the basis of rating. Today rates are levied upon houses, shops, factories, warehouses, machinery. Such a basis of rating in reality is a heavy fine upon thrift, upon enterprise and upon industry. Every effort to promote trade and to provide labor is penalised, while the man who owns land and refuses to use it escapes the attention of the rate assessor altogether, and the man who uses land indifferently is let off lightly. This is so obviously topsy-turvydom that nobody today defends a system which penalizes the

good citizen who serves his day and generation to the best of his ability and exalts the vice of the bad citizen as a positive virtue. If we were to transfer the basis of rating entirely from man's industry and enterprise, i. e., from shops, houses, factories, warehouses and machinery and were to place rates entirely upon site values irrespective of the uses to which these site values were put, what would be the effect?

Land is limited in quantity. It can neither be taken away nor hid. The present system in passing by the man who keeps his land idle has encouraged him to fence his land in and to fence the people out until the latter, compelled by land hunger, consent to pay the unholy tribute which is demanded by the landowner. To rate therefore on site values irrespective of the uses to which the site is put would quickly put an end to the landowner's power to fence land in. The pressure of rates upon lands of value which are not in use and yielding no rent, and upon lands which are being put only to partial and indifferent use and therefore yielding but inadequate rental, would quickly break down the barriers which have kept idle land and idle men from contact with each other. These owners, called upon to pay rates on lands which they have selfishly kept idle or but partially used, would quickly be entering into competition with each other to secure the presence of builders and other land users upon these "no rent yielding" lands. This competition of land owners would bring down the price of land with a run, and it would eventually reach its real value upon which it would come into the hands of willing users. With land available at real instead of monopoly values, the building and allied trades would find such a constant demand for their services that wages in these trades would rise. With rising wages and more constant employment in this first line of industry more food and of a more wholesome quality would be purchased by this army of workers, more clothes, more commodities of every kind would be desired and would be purchased now that increased purchasing powers had come to them. This would in turn react favorably upon the second and third grades of the industrial beehive, and all would feel the beneficial effects of this forcing of land into use. Such competition by landowners to secure users of idle land will lead to such a fall in the price of land that eventually all lands under this economic pressure will be made practically open and free.

(2) Today taxes are levied on houses, shops, factories, and other improvements. Or they are levied on tea, sugar and other foodstuffs—a mode of taxation which above all others is burdensome and unjust, since it taxes the necessary consumption of the very poorest. Or it is levied in other ways which have no reference at all to what the citizen *ought* to contribute to the State, but are based solely on what the Government thinks the citizen is able or can be made to pay.

All these taxes should be abolished, and in their place should be substituted the one *just* tax, a tax on the value of land alone. For the citizen should pay neither more nor less than his just share of taxation; he should pay, not in accordance with his wealth or industry or usefulness, but accord-

ing to the value of the benefit conferred on him by the State or by the community. And all these benefits which come to the individual from the community either in the shape of public services such as street cleaning and lighting, police, sewerage and so on, or in the indirect form of the benefit of living in a highly developed society—are measured in value by the value of land. To avail himself of them a man must have a site, a standing place, on the earth's surface; and the more of these benefits he can get at any point, the higher will be the value of the land there.

This just tax is a tax of nature's own devising. It not only ought to be collected, but is inevitably collected. Today it is collected by a few privileged individuals whom we have allowed to be private tax collectors, and society deprived of its just revenues is compelled to impose other taxes—so that the people are taxed twice. For the future, this tax should be collected by the State, and double taxation should be put an end to.

To take land values in this way for State revenues will have the same beneficent effects as to take them for municipal revenues. It will give men complete property in the fruits of their labor, and by destroying the power of the privileged few to hold out of use the land which is the source of all wealth, will enable all men to provide for the needs and necessities of themselves and those dependent on them. It will lay the dread spectre of want and unemployment which is already writing on the wall the judgment of God on our civilization.

Think what all this means! Land monopoly is the mother of all other monopolies. Its fruits are privileged and vested interests—the great fundamental wrongs which are the curse of society, for from these vicious elements flow all tyranny, persecution and despotism. Thus to make land open and accessible to all the Children of Men is to promote the aspirations of Justice. Justice is something grander than benevolence, something more august than charity; it is that which demands the righting of wrongs, that which will not be denied, that which will not be put off with compromise. Justice is the law of human progress and by no other way can the social adjustments which will bring equality of right to life and liberty between man and man be secured. Justice therefore demands that this great legalized wrong which holds the God-created land in its icy monopolistic grip shall be broken of its power to exercise its parasitic toll upon the fruits of labor, and of its power to curtail the liberty and freedom of the mass by the excessive licence which is wielded by the privileged few. Thus shall perfect liberty be established for all, that liberty which is bounded only by the equal liberty of every other.

Can any man engage himself in nobler cause? What after all has life's struggling to offer in comparison with such a struggle as this? We honor Liberty in name and form, we set up her statues and we sound her praises. But have we trusted her? Liberty means Justice and Justice is the natural law—the law of health, of symmetry and strength, of fraternity and co-operation. Liberty! It is a word to conjure with, not to vex the ear in empty boastings. As the sun is the lord of life as well as of light; as his beams not merely

pierce the clouds, but support all growth, supply all motion, and call forth from what would otherwise be a cold and inert mass, all the infinite diversities of being and beauty—so is Liberty to mankind. Shall we not trust her? In our times as in times before insidious forces are at work producing inequality and wretchedness and want. We progress and we progress, we girdle continents with iron roads, and knit cities together with the mesh of telegraph wires; each day marks a new advance. With swift, steady strides and prodigious leaps the power of human hands to satisfy human wants advances and advances—is multiplied and multiplied. Yet the struggle for mere existence becomes more and more intense and human labor has become the cheapest of commodities. Besides glutted warehouses human beings are faint with hunger and cold and under the shadow of churches festers the vice that is born of want. Three thousand years of advance and still the moan goes up. "They have made our lives bitter with hard bondage." Three thousand years of advance and the piteous cry of children is in the moan and the silent anguish of mothers is wafted upwards to the giver of all life. If Christ came back to the world today, what would He say? Would He not say: Woe unto you that have laid field to field and house to house. Your sacrifices and burnt offerings are an abomination. I was hungry and ye fed me not. I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink. I was naked and ye clothed me not, for ye brought me possessions which were not the fruits of your labors—for ye reaped where ye sowed not, ye gathered where ye did not scatter. Your riches are stained with the blood of the children upon whose labor ye took toll. Would He not say these things, and once again would He not preach the law of love—that love which delighteth to serve and not to be served, love which delighteth to minister and to seek not her own. Would He not once again command men to do unto others as they would have others do? If He would say these things, what then would He have to say to those who in His name have fought for the perpetuation of privileges which have deprived the many of their God-given rights to live and to labor, what would He say to those who offer charity in the name of love and who hold back the hand of justice? Would He not say, "I know ye not" and would He not as in the olden time drive them out of His temple? Think on these things and ye shall then understand what He meant when He said "I am come not to bring you peace, but a sword."

"Come with me," said Richard Cobden as John Bright turned heart-stricken from a newly made grave—"There are in England women and children dying with hunger—with hunger made by the laws. Come with me and we will not rest until we repeal those laws." And there is hunger and want in Great Britain still and women and children die of it; it is hunger and want caused by laws which deny to men their God-given birthright of access to the God-given, God-created land, from whose bosom life's succor is drawn. Who will help to repeal those laws? Will you? There are many ways in which you may help—proclaim this glorious gospel of emancipation, and assist by gift to get it proclaimed from the house-tops until all shall hear it.

Liberty—the full, free liberty of every child born into the world and bounded only by the equal freedom of every other. Equality. That equality which makes men equal before the law and which gives to all equal opportunities to life, to labor and to the pursuit of happiness. Fraternity—that fraternity of men which would would live and let live, which would seek the highest good of all and in seeking the highest good of all find the highest good of each. Is it not time these words rang out as clarion call to the youth and manhood of Christian England? Let them then be for a sign and counter-sign, let those who hear the call, also see the need—and seeing—serve! With their service the forces of righteousness shall no longer stand helpless and palsied to break down and hurl from the seat of power the injustices which today are grinding the lives of the people to powder, and with their service the future shall hold promise of better times for the masses of men, for the clouds shall lift from the valleys and pass over the mountains and with their passing we shall see the dawn of the day of Liberty!

**ADDRESS OF HONORABLE MARK. M. FAGAN, MAYOR OF
JERSEY CITY, BEFORE THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THAT CITY, JUNE 24, 1913.**

With the adoption of the commission form of government Jersey City enters upon a new experiment. This plan has been adopted because of the dissatisfaction of the public with the results of the existing charter, and in the hope that the new commission form of city government may bring advantages which have not been forthcoming under the old order. I think the results that will come from the commission form of government will be very disappointing to our people unless the new commissioners shall adopt and put in force a new and radical policy.

I have had six years practical experience in the government of Jersey City, and have learned much from that experience. It is my judgment that so-called good government, meaning the honest enforcement of the law, the economical expenditure of the taxes, and the running of the government upon business principles, will not produce the results which many people seem to expect. If this is our only policy, our tax rate will steadily go up and the burden upon the taxpayers will increase and will not diminish.

I have read carefully the programme of the men who were candidates for commissioners, and I have seen no idea suggested which I think will at all satisfy the high expectations which have been raised in the public mind. It is proposed and promised that we will give the people clean streets, constructed sewer system, extensive parks and playgrounds, full school accommodations, an adequate police and fire department with proper equipment, a better gas and trolley service; but no candidate or commissioner has yet indicated where he expected to get the money to do all