

come bounteous homesteads, hamlets have become cities, towns have become great commercial centres? With the rise and development of mighty states, and especially in the large commercial cities, what is the meaning, and what the proper function, of the immense value that accrues to the land, a value, not the result of individual effort, not a product of industry, as the production of crops, of horses, of goods, but a value that is caused by the joint growth of the community.

Here is a power that determines the destination, the distribution of wealth, and like every other power will be a blessing or a bane, just as it is used for its appropriate or inappropriate function. It is not the product of individual effort; then how can individuals rightly claim it. If we allow individuals to continue to appropriate it as we are doing now, we shall certainly develop two monstrosities, one of excessive superabundant wealth, the other a spectacle of pitiable poverty. Just as light is intended for the eye, and air for the lungs, is not this particular fund—the land value—intended for the joint use of the community; is this not the proper source from which we should draw our funds for community purposes.

The golden rule is: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." The rule upon which society seems to act at present is: "Look out for your own welfare, and if, to keep yourself out of the slough of poverty, it is necessary for you to take advantage of laws that bear hardly against your fellow-men, why 'business is business,' you must do it."

Here, for example, is a man who owns a piece of land, and his fellow-man who occupies it as tenant. The lease is about to expire, but meanwhile the land has advanced in value, by reason of the growth of the community. Now, the golden rule says to the landlord: "Put yourself in your tenant's place. He has worked all these years to build up a business on that lot. In his place, wouldn't you like to have the owner of it renew the lease at the same rental (or lower)?" Assuredly. But says "business":

"Raise the rent to the extreme limit of the increase in value! The golden rule must go by the board."

It is practically out of the question to act in the spirit of the golden rule so far as this great matter of land ownership is concerned. A proper incidence of taxation by putting the land value now collected from the tenant in the public till, would give the golden rule spirit a chance. It would remove the great obstacle, Greed, which now stands between fellow-men. So far as natural opportunities are concerned, men would have no motive as they now have to ignore and repel Christ's teaching. This is a consideration which ought to appeal strongly to every Christian minister.

We hear much of the "Evidences of Christianity" but what evidence is at all comparable to Christianity itself? Let the world once see its doctrine, the triumph of righteousness, the dominance of justice, the reign of love, and what other evidence is needed? But if we disregard these things, trample justice beneath our feet, array society in hostile camps, rewarding the undeserving and casting down the meritorious, filching from the producer that which he has honestly earned with his toil, treating this most important charge the administration of the earth with childlike recklessness, making the land the great game for speculators, teaching that industry is not the only honest avenue to riches, and that methods of extortion are no disgrace, in the face of all these things, of what possible value to compile learned treatises on the Evidences of Christianity? Truth is its own defender, and justice its own vindicator.

Let us once have the manifestations of Christianity in our social adjustments and Christianity will have all the evidence it needs for its defence. Corrupt fruit appeals in vain to the ancestry of its source, the fully developed fruit, rich in its juices, luscious in its flavor, nourishing in its substance, needs no evidence of its genealogy.

J. W. BENGOUGH,
President.

J. L. DAWKINS,
Secretary.