

What is the meaning of the Fatherhood? What do we mean when we proclaim humanity a Brotherhood? What is the meaning of the command: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself? Do not these doctrines necessarily teach the equal heirship of every one of God's children to God's gifts? What possible respect could we have for a religion which declared that God had furnished His gifts for one portion of humanity exclusively and not for all equally, that the earth hath He given to *some* of the children of men?

If this doctrine of the equal brotherhood and the equal heirship is essential to Christianity, how can we justify our present administration of this important trust, whereby we allow one part of humanity the power to charge their fellows for ever for the occupation of this planet, for access to the bounties furnished by the Creator? We can easily understand that it is quite right that men should charge for the clothes they fabricate, the houses they build, the things they make, the services they perform; but for men to claim as a right the power to charge for the land which they never made and to continue this charge for all generations, does not this claim set at naught the fact that this earth is the *gift* of God to humanity?

Do we not by this method of administering the gifts of the Creator teach that the heritage of the earth is the gift of God to *some* of the children of men and not the gift to all? In the face of this administration with what consistency can we maintain the doctrine of the fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of humanity?

The foregoing question necessarily involves another: To whom belong of right the products of industry? To the industrious men and women who produced them, to those who have aided in their production or transportation, who have rendered service? Can any one in accordance with justice claim produce, except on the condition that in some way he has aided in production, that he has honestly endeavored to render service? To claim produce without producing, is not this the doctrine

of vassalage, of servitude, of spoliation, of slavery? It most certainly cannot be the doctrine of the golden rule of Christianity.

And yet how do we treat this doctrine of service before reward? To reap without sowing, to enjoy wealth without begetting wealth, to claim product without producing, is looked on not merely as right but quite meritorious. In every large city, we see some claiming immense incomes to the production of which they are under no obligation to perform even the shadow of a service or to furnish an ounce of product. So long as the producers must surrender a share of their product for the occupation of the land for access to the common heritage, just so long do we deny the right of the producer to the reward of his industry, and we teach that men may claim product to the production of which they have contributed no effort.

Is it not essential to religion that we respect the rights of property? In order to do this must we not learn what is the correct basis on which this right must rest? How can we be honest unless we know the foundation of honesty? That the producer has a right to produce is universally conceded, but can there be even a shadow of justice in allowing some to appropriate wealth simply because population becomes more congested and consequently land relatively more scarce. And yet do we not maintain this system without so much as a whisper of protest? Wherever there is any indication that population is likely to concentrate, do we not witness a rush for possession of the land, not to till and dress it, or in any way to use it as an agent of production, that men might rejoice in the fruits thereof; but to use it as an agent of extortion. How can it be right for one man to claim service from another man, except on condition of rendering an equivalent service in return? To be honest must not service be reciprocal?

By what possible right can one man say to his fellow: "You must work to feed me, to clothe me, and to house me, to tend me in my sickness, to educate my children; but you must not