

high intellectual level which makes the Commons unique among legislative bodies. In Great Britain the name "single tax" is rarely used, nor does the agitation take the same form it does here, for the movement has Protean shapes. In Great Britain three hundred local rating authorities have petitioned Parliament for power to levy rates on unimproved values only, and the Liberal party has included this in its program. Many of the municipalities in the old country have had striking examples of the growth of land values and are recognizing that it is a just principle that these values should be taken for the use of the whole people who create them. It is but two months since a bill for urban site value rating was introduced in the Commons, and on the motion for a second reading the friends of land value taxation scored a substantial victory by largely reducing the normal Conservative majority. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the Liberal leader, in a speech delivered on the 19th of February, declared that "the taxation of land values is a reform both necessary and urgent, and the first Tory you meet on the street will say as much." An overwhelming majority of the Scottish representatives in Parliament, Conservatives as well as Liberals, are pledged to the issue of land value taxation; indeed, it is doubtful if there are more than two or three of the seventy-odd Parliamentary districts of Scotland where a representative could be returned who would dare to antagonize the growing feeling that the landlord class must be divested of their privileges and that this must be done through the operation of the taxing power.

Such is a brief *resume* of the essential facts in the progress of the single tax in the last few years. I make no argument as to the benefits that are cited as certain to result from its adoption; with that I am not concerned. But single taxers can at least reasonably insist that they are at last a force to reckon with and that a very substantial progress has been made. That some of the steps that have been taken have borne other names, that single taxers themselves are less uncompromising than formerly, is nothing; the character of the agitation has changed, but not its essential aim, and the general movement of tax reform all along the line seems, it must be admitted by those who will indulge their candor, to have been in the direction and along the path which single taxers have pointed out, not always with perfect tact, but with high sincerity and splendid zeal.



## ECONOMIC FREEDOM.

BY RABBI EMIL HIRSCH.\*

*Lesson, the 25th chapter of Leviticus.*

Certain words possess the native magic in undiminished power to stir the depths of the human heart. Among these ranks high, truth; and loyalty is one of the elect. But of this high company perhaps the one crowned with the most richly studded diadem is "freedom." We incline to the belief that this sacramental word was introduced into the dictionary perhaps one hundred and twenty years ago, that at all events then it began to sound its emphatic appeal and found resonant echo in the affections and the attitudes of men. But this offhanded impression is erroneous. Freedom has been the aspiration of men

\* Rev. Dr. Emil G. Hirsch, of Chicago, is one of the foremost Jewish rabbis in this country. His congregation is one of the largest and wealthiest. He is perhaps the *biggest* native American in the Church; calls himself a radical, is intellectually a giant, and to adopt the language of another, is "intermittently spiritually lofty." The broad, general lines of the above sermon, so eloquently beautiful in parts, delivered at the Sinai Congregation earlier in the year, leave little to be desired, though a closer inspection reveals some

ever since they came into their human patrimony. Its forevision has winged the lyre of many a poet years before even the so-called Christian era began to be counted. Its winsome smile is a favorite theme of the Greek writers and orators. It points the eloquence of many a Roman politician; it has not been a foreign accent in the literature of the ancient Hebrews. Why, from this literature our own nation had to borrow phrase and idiom when it desired to cast into articulate speech the sentiment of its young independence. The Biblical verse I read to you is inscribed on Liberty Bell. It was sounded in the native city of our Magna Charta from the belfry of the cradle shrine of our American political nationality. And yet, though freedom has the power to stir with emotions every truly human heart, how few are they who have grasped its truer implications. When we talk of freedom we generally have in mind our political rights, and then even we confound them with privilege, forgetting that freedom while conferring signal distinctions demands also the performance of sacred duties. We are still under the thrall of eighteenth century dogmatism. The leaders of thought in France and in England who, in that era of storm and stress boldly speculated on the destiny and the dower of the human race, were undoubtedly convinced that with political barriers laid low peace and happiness would choose to abide in the tents of man. If in their day justice was a stranger in the habitations of the human kind they laid its absence at the door of denied freedom. They reasoned that with special privileges abolished, distinction of class obliterated, and every man in possession of the unalienable right to help determine the social will as expressed in political action, freedom accompanied by her first-born child, justice, and its fair faced mate, contentment, would take an honored and exalted seat at every table around which men were gathered and be a glad guest in every house where men met at the call of their own inclinations or entered in obedience to the decree of nature.

We read an interesting chapter from the Bible this morning. If you believe that the Bible has come from God you must have a care not to be too liberal in your hearts with such words as anarchists and socialists. For on the theory that God is the author of our chapter, the men who plead for a new system of land ownership simply recall the divine precepts of God. How a really orthodox Christian or Jew can ever explain his faith that God as the author of the Bible has denounced private ownership in land while he, the pious Jew or Christian, presumes to denounce Henry George as a disturber of the public peace, as a pestiferous anarchist, is beyond comprehension. But of course we do not believe that this chapter was written by God. What of it! The sentences show at all events that one time or another away back in the history of Judaism, there was a man, perhaps there were many men, who thought deeply on the problem of private ownership of land, and practically came to the conclu-

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“rifts in the lute.” For example, the good Doctor says, and rightly: “The natural right to ownership in ethics is limited not in law—the law is not always ethical—by the corresponding power of production and social service.” But elsewhere he says, speaking of the right of inheritance and the fact that the state may nullify a bequest: “Therein is the proof that the power to bequeath is not a natural but an acquired right.” Whether the right to bequeath is or is not a natural right—and single taxers generally hold that it is—the Doctor’s logic limps a little here. For the law may not decide what is *natural* any more than what is *ethical*, so “therein” cannot lie the “proof.”

Nor is it true that “What I produce is mine by right divine as long as I use it for the benefit of all.” There can be no divine right of property at all if its right of use be qualified—it must in such event cease to be property. Nor does the happiness of the community depend upon the use to which property in things produced by human labor is put. The self interest that determines its use cannot harm, but on the contrary must benefit all. And this is true of all property save property in land.—THE EDITOR.

sion that Henry George and his fellows advocate. Were these men fools or were they wise? We, however honest, from our point of view, we, who on the whole are the beneficiaries of the prevailing system of land ownership, have no doubt but that this chapter in the Bible is chimerical utopia ; that its re-enactment into law will interfere with vested natural rights, and as such ought to be branded and stigmatized as dangerous. But let us not forget that while we ride on the crest of success millions and millions of human beings are in the trough of the waves ; that while we have no particular reason to complain, there are millions and millions who drenched in misery must according to their view point protest that things are not as they might be. Is the philosophy basic to this chapter after all so unjust? We have talked of political freedom as the panacea. We are profuse in our protestations of faith in the efficacy of political freedom even as the surest road to economic peace. But how many of American freemen are economically independent? Carrol D. Wright, the Commissioner of the United States Government, in charge of the Bureau of Labor, has brought together statistics showing that in this country forty-five millions of human beings to meet the expenses of their living have an annual income of \$155 to their credit. Think of it ! \$155 to buy shoes, garments, bread, medicine, school books perhaps, and for a whole year of three hundred and sixty-five days. Forty-five millions of men, women and children, at this notch of the economic scale ! But, say you, that is a division by too large a divisor. Mr. Wright was provided for the contention. Ten millions of men have an average income a year of \$500 on which to support wife and children. But then, this condition is due to their own lack of foresight. Why did they marry? Aye, but if they didn't marry, Mr. Millionaire, where would you get your business from? Their marrying has filled your sweat shops with human hands. It has made your bargain counter a possibility. Your own business would go to pieces if these ten millions of men had acted according to your comfortable theory, which does of course not interfere with your pleasure. You have a right to marry. Teach this gospel and you will discover what will be its fruit, aye even in your own well protected garden. You will have no one to supply your bargain counter ; you will find no one to work in your sweat shop ; you will have no one to buy your adulterated food. Your whole business will go to pieces. \$500, ten millions of men. These are trustworthy figures, that admit of no quibbling ; and that is possible in the best and the wisest nation in the world. Where is the possibility for these "submerged" to lead a truly human life? Have you ever been in the tenement house districts? Have you ever peeped into the rooms dignified by the name of "home" in which your brother men, women and children have to live? They live under conditions in which you would not expose the life of your pet dog ; yet they are human beings. Your horses are under better shelter, better grooming, and better food and receive better medical attendance than ten millions of men, women and children, yet they are members of the human family. It is their own fault? Have they been drunkards, have they been improvident, have they been stupid are they corroded by vice? Let us take the last point first. Grant that they are. Will you blame them? Virtue is a delicate flower that will only develop in the open. What virtue can resplendently bloom in a hovel? The virtue of chastity and modesty cannot thrive where there is absolutely no chance for privacy. There are hovels on the west side where grandfather, father, wife, grown-up daughters and grown-up sons have to live, if that be living, in one room, in houses where every room presents the same horror. You talk about virtue ; can there be virtue in such living? We complain that the little boys will steal ; that they will pilfer iron couplings and brass nuts in the railway companies' yards and sell them to the fence keeper. And the wise men and women of modern philanthropy beseech

the legislature to enact a law making it a penal offense for a fence keeper to buy any article whether stolen or not from minors, pretending that this will save society, and the children. You may enact a thousand laws. You will arrest the boys as often as you can get a policeman to seize hold of them, and yet the boys will continue to steal from the railroad. These boys are not different from what ours are. Let us be honest. Do the rich hesitate to defraud the government? Are we honest and consistent in our contentions? Do we pay custom duties as we should when we come back from Europe? Do we pay our taxes as we should? Have we fear of the law? Has the law made us saints? Have we the right to condemn the little urchins? They are hungry, and if they are not they crave some pleasure as well as we do. They know that little boy over on the avenue has his "fun." And they would have theirs. They also want to go to the theatre once in a while, but as they cannot patronize these decent shows that we do, they seek the blood and thunder shows. Now, that costs money. Where are they going to get that money from? They steal. Will the law change this? First change the conditions, raise the moral tone, and the "Law" will be found largely superfluous, as now is bound to be ineffective. Liberty of political action is after all a tinsel gew gaw. Economic independence is the very essence of true liberty. It, and not a political counterfeit was the solicitude of that old Hebrew legislator who wrote this chapter to prevent just such lawless conditions as are prevalent in every modern industrial state throughout the world. We may differ as to the practicability of this scheme. But the underlying principles are certainly beyond all dispute. Property to be morally sanctioned must be sanctioned by proper use. Production and social service alone confer the right to property. What I produce is mine by divine right as long as I use it for the benefit of all.

The natural right to ownership in ethics, is limited not in law—the law is not always ethical—by the corresponding power of production, and social service. This is the only foundation for a just law regulating the status of private property. There is none other, and there can be no other. If you doubt my statement devote some minutes to the study of some treatise on ethics. I care not on what basis it be written. Ethics may be on the Christian basis; on the Jewish foundation; on that of the hypothesis of evolution; on that of the idealistic or the materialistic dogma. Whatever its basis no system of ethics but recognizes that production and social service alone confer moral title to property. In other words property is ours not for selfish, but for social ends. You are the owner of what you have produced, if in your use of what is yours you look not merely to your advantage but to the advantage of all. Of course Adam Smith and John Stuart Mills, contend that if you consistently follow your own interests you further the interest or interests of all. But this comfortable optimism has been shown to be illusive by every thinker who holds the consecration of his high proclamation. Interest, selfish interest, carried to its logical end is not conducive to social harmony. It leads to the very opposite. What one produces is one's own by right divine. But even this property is one's own only as long as its use is directed for the benefit of all. Use of property which is merely selfish and detrimental to others, is immoral use. By such use weakened the credentials to ownership; even when production has conferred the title. This logically, as one may readily infer, excludes in the first place the right of inheritance as a natural right. Lasalle was perfectly justified both from a moral and a philosophical point of view in insisting that the right of inheritance is not a natural but an acquired right. The state does not meddle with your acts when you give away property while you are living. The moment one closes his eyes the state has to approve of the bequests made. And when the will is not drawn up in proper form the court upon being invoked interferes and nullifies

the deceased owner's last will and testament. Therein is the proof that the power to bequeath is not a natural but an acquired right. Another point which this definition of the ethical warrant for property brings out is that there in sober truth no title to land.

There is title to the use of land, but not to the land itself. I "own" a corner lot which I say is mine. I have not made or produced it. Our Jewish teacher was right when he said to God belongs the earth and the fullness thereof. He was a great philosopher who said that he who drove the first stake into land, and called it his own was the first one to bring trouble upon humanity. What right has a man to hold a lot on which others would settle? He refuses to settle on it, he holds it for a rise in price. He bars others from the use thereof. In some states you cannot hold a lot and leave it unimproved. Unless it be put to use within a certain time the state interferes. There are countries to-day still of the opinion that the right to the possession of land is not a natural right. We claim the unearned increment, but complain about the undeserved decrement. Does that not uncover the whole fallacy of our reasoning? What makes a lot valuable? That you and I and others require it for use. If fifty thousand people moved away from a certain neighborhood, land property would forfeit its value. You and I make its price. Hence the Georgeites are right when they insist that property rights cannot be in real estate. They are in the use, but not in the land. This theory may be two centuries ahead of our time. But these changes are coming to pass. When I peep into the future I have no doubt that with the advance of civilization men will be brought to the adoption of these principles of the old Jewish law. And no harm will accrue to any one. We simply shall have a better humanity. You will agree, friends, that a society in which there is neither poverty nor excessive wealth is the best society. Where men by their labor win what sustains body and soul; where men enjoy through their earnings the higher implications of manhood; where all find the opportunities of a human life, society is better than is ours, in which a few have almost everything, and the millions have next to nothing. You and I of course are still at ease, but how long do you think it will be before even we shall feel the pressure? It is coming on like an avalanche; one industry after another is syndicated, and where syndicates leap into life someone is sure to be "skindicated." More and more men are forced into places of economic dependence. You ask, is not a man as comfortable on a salary with a good position as a man who struggles for a livelihood in a precarious business? In a certain sense he is more comfortable, but in another he has lost something of his manhood, he is dependent to a large extent on the whims of one or the other. As long as the original owners, who grew up to be the controllers of vast merchantile enterprises, are at the helm, there is probability of some mitigation of this dependence. They know what it is to be below. But when the crown prince-succeed the original founders of the dynasty,—when they who never struggled, have become controllers, who, under their domination, can retain his self respect? For them all is a matter of contract; the element of personality disappears; an impersonal relation is established. Life is an equation in dividends. The underling who would save his head must show dividends or lose his position. What will all this come to? These trusts are becoming so terrible, so rich and powerful that there is only one other trust that can cope with them, and that is the state. With this stage reached, we have socialism. But where then will liberty be? Shall we then not have lapsed into absolute slavery? For in a socialistic state none is free, all are enslaved. Or we shall before have an eruption like that of Mt. Pelee. The Deluge! Shall we wait complacently? For the sake of saving our freedom we have a duty to perform. Spread the better knowledge! Mitigate the evils of the present system. Speak to the backward consciences of the people. A crisis confronts us. Drifting on, drifting on, do-

ing a little charity here and there will not stave off the day of judgment. Gog and Magog will rise, I am afraid before the Messianic age will dawn. May God in His mercy so guide men that such terrible night of suffering and of rage may be spared unto the world. Political freedom without economic independence is a delusion. To make men free they require economic independence and safety. Else, notwithstanding their political privileges they are apt to become slaves. Israel came out of a house of slavery. For this reason Moses as our chapter shows, had greater solicitude for the freedom and safety of human personality than for the security of human property. When a system is sanctified through which little children are forced to dance and die at the altar of vice and greed, religion must thunder that something is wrong, and must plead for the living humanities whatever may befall dead properties. Yea, proclaim liberty, says our text. But it was not the liberty to starve, but the liberty to lead an independent dignified human existence, which the Biblical writer acclaimed and recommended. His implied definitions of the limitations of the rights of property will be accepted by humanity, for his principles provide for man's economic independence. Weaken this and you have destroyed God's covenant. God has made the land, not man. His therefore it shall be. Ours is its use for social, not selfish, service. Amen.



## REV. THOMAS McLOUGHLIN.\*

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THE OLDEST PRIEST IN NEW YORK GIVES HIS VIEWS FREELY.

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Rev. Father Thomas McLoughlin, in an interview with the Editor of the REVIEW, and in answer to the following inquiry, expressed himself with great candor :

“ Will you tell the REVIEW something about your belief in the single tax ? ”

### SINGLE TAX.

“ It was in 1886, on my return from a trip to my native land, after 41 years' absence, that I first heard of Mr. George and his book, 'Progress and Poverty.' I read it and saw the light. I studied it and became more and more enlightened and convinced. Ever since then I have been an ardent and zealous propagandist of its economic theories, on account of the wonderful temporal blessings I believe its practical realization would secure to mankind, and still more on account of the great spiritual blessings to follow the adoption of its the principles. With my life long friend, Dr. McGlynn, and such distinguished

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\*Reverend Thomas McLoughlin was born in Shanless, Ardee, County Louth, Ireland, on the 21st of November, 1826, and baptized on the 26th of the same month by Rev. John Levins, P. P. His father was Patrick, a farmer, as was his grandfather, Thomas, and his great-grandfather, John, all formerly of the Parish of Collon.

When young he was sent to a National school, and at the age of fourteen went to the College of Navan, County Meath, where he studied five years. He then came to the United States, and began his studies for the priesthood at St. John's College, Fordham, in November, 1845, which was then under the presidency of Rev. John Harley, and subsequently of Rev. James Roosevelt Baily, afterward Bishop of Newark, and later Archbishop of Baltimore.