

# THE SINGLE TAX REVIEW

A Record of the Progress of Single Tax and Tax Reform  
Throughout the World.

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## MEN AND LILIES, THE DIVINE INTENT.

(CHAPEL ADDRESS BY GEORGE WHITE, AT HACKENSACK, N. J.)

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You must expect that a layman may have some difficulty in following exactly the example of ministers of the gospel in undertaking to draw a lesson from the teachings of Jesus, and you may reasonably be afraid that, if anything different be attempted, something unorthodox may be said. Yet I pray you to believe I am going to put my whole heart and religious conscience into this little preachment. I have lived, read the Bible and studied the teachings of some philosophers in vain if I make any serious mistake in my treatment of my text, which shall be a few verses of the sixth chapter of Matthew, to be set down as follows:

"Consider the lilies, how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

"Therefore I say unto you take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on, for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you."

It is apparent that Jesus did not claim that to Himself or any of His immediate followers food and clothes would be provided by miraculous production. These things He Himself used were the results of human labor, just as we see them to-day, and He Himself from His early manhood until He was thirty years old, we are led to believe, worked day by day with tools at the carpenter's trade to make a living. Among His followers, the apostles and others, must have been some who fully complied with all the requirements of the modern evangelist that we shall believe on Christ and consecrate ourselves to His service, and in this fashion seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Yet we have no record of daily bread or new or clean clothes or buildings and furniture having been added to or obtained by any of these believers, except as human industry and the use of mechanical processes had brought them into being. Even Adam, previous to his condemnation, so far

as we can see, would have starved to death if he had not exerted Himself to get food. Paul, in his instructions to the Thessalonians, shows what the rule for early Christians had to be, when he wrote, "This we command you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat."

To find Christ's meaning we must look a little closer than a literal reading of His sayings. He says "Consider the lilies," and not merely that, but "how they grow." I have heard and read many sermons on my text, but in none of them could I find any consideration of these three words "how they grow." It may be that the original text of the Scriptures does not exactly justify any special emphasis on these three words. Still, let us consider how lilies do grow. They are perennial plants, with bulbous root-stocks. After a period of dormancy they send out new roots, push forth leaves, and finally bud and blossom, becoming often radiant with color, and in some cases perhaps delicious in perfume. They grow in certain uniform ways, the world over. Botanists can tell us much of the natural laws—the Divine ordinances, in fact, which govern their growth; and floriculturists may describe to us the special conditions under which they grow best, the kind of location in which they thrive, the quality and texture of the soil in which they best find a home, the temperature they enjoy, the sunshine and moisture they desire. Lilies grow in harmony with Divine law and intent, and without any supernatural or miraculous aid in the ordinary sense of the words. God does not directly sprinkle lilies with perfume or paint them with special colors. Under adverse conditions, lilies, like other plants, will make a brave attempt to flourish. They will do the best they can to live and perfect the annual cycle of their growth, but all they can do is to make the most of their natural ability to take advantage of the Divine plans, and all we can do for them is subject to natural or Divine law and along the line of giving them the best opportunity. Even the plant specialists, who produce varieties in form and color among lilies, for instance, by what is called the process of hybridization—the cleverest of these will tell us he has success only so far as he discovers and works in conjunction with natural law.

Individual peculiarities there are among lilies, and complications enough to be puzzling confront one who would know everything about them, but these fundamental truths are apparent. They grow as is their nature to, and four things at least they need: food and moisture and light and warmth. These they must have or they cannot flourish. If we seek the righteousness or rightness of God regarding lilies, there are two things for us to do: study their nature and God's plans, and give the little plants all the chance there is in life for them.

I think we all have the belief that God's intent regarding lilies is that they should by all means be allowed to flourish to the limit of their possibility. If we have in our gardens too many lilies, we would rather divide with our neighbors than destroy the spare plants, and who is there who does not regret the quick decay of the blossoms that are culled for decorative purposes?

So much for lilies. Now, for mankind. We have in our text Jesus for

authority that there exists and is discoverable, if not at first apparent, an analogy between the growth of lilies and the process by which men can obtain a living. Let us try to trace this analogy. There is a science of botany which deals with the nature of plants and the Divine laws governing their growth, and there is an art of floriculture which has to do with plans for giving flowering plants the best opportunity possible for growth, and it is this science and this art which must afford information as to the fundamental facts underlying the growth of flowers. So there is a science of political economy which concerns itself seriously with an investigation of the nature of wealth and the natural or Divine laws which govern its production by and distribution among men, and there is an art of statesmanship, if you please, which seeks to arrange plans by which in a most perfect and just manner men can make a living, enjoy liberty, and pursue happiness. And just as a knowledge of botany and floriculture shows how God intended flowers to grow and flourish, so does a knowledge of true political economy and statesmanship enable one to realize how God intends men to obtain food, clothing, shelter, satisfactions of various kinds, and still have time and opportunity to cultivate their spiritual natures.

This knowledge teaches that just as flowers grow in accordance with natural law and because of Divine plan and purpose, so do men produce wealth. They do so by exerting effort in extracting or adapting natural products, by growing, or taking advantage of the reproductive forces of nature, and by exchanging. In such operations, they must work in harmony with Divine law, and it must be in proportion as they can do so freely that they can have the best success.

What Jesus may have meant, then, is this. It is the Divine purpose for men to make a living by working, but without taking special thought, without needing special capabilities, without being in fear of want of success. It is the Divine purpose for men to be successful in making a living. He has provided ways and means by which it can be done. He has not arranged for perfection of result in the growth of lilies, and left unprovided for the possibility of human realization of a full measure of material welfare, and if we seek His righteousness, in order to help the coming of His kingdom on earth—or, in other words, if we are reasonably industrious and careful to bring our sociological arrangements into harmony with His plans, all these things will be added unto or obtained by us.

If this be the correct view of our Saviour's utterances, there need not be any doubt as to our duty. It is clear we must make our own plans harmonize with the Divine intent, and it is right here that we must plead guilty and deserving of condemnation. The world has never yet seen any nation or large aggregation of people which paid full attention to the matter of Divine plans for making a living by men. We may all agree that lilies, to thrive, must have food, moisture, light and warmth, and that God so intended it, but when we are asked to unite in proclaiming that men have common right to the earth, must have access to the natural resources of mines and water-powers

and land sites, and must be allowed freely to transport, exchange and trade where they please, without obstruction or penalty, because God so intended it, some of us make reservations, and, as I see it, by so doing defer the possibility of the coming on earth of the kingdom of God.

What others may do is their affair. For my part, I have resolved I will never by voice or action encourage two things which are certain and sure interferences with God's plans. First—such ownership of earth as does not enable men to use it as freely as is possible and does not recognize fully in some way their common rights to it. Second—any system of restriction or burden upon trade, transportation or exchange. And I go further. What Jesus had in mind was not the mere production of good things by men. Production may be ample and to an extent free, but distribution—just distribution—distribution according to moral law and Divine intent—must be secured. I hold that all of us who are conscious of our responsibilities to God and our fellow creatures must resolutely refuse to sanction any other distribution of wealth than a just one, or to condone the social sin involved in the unnecessary taking of private property for public purposes.

I believe that God made the city and the suburban town as well as the country, any poet to the contrary notwithstanding. I believe it is strictly true God has made full provision for both public and private income, and that it is the part of all Christians to investigate His purposes and plans, and to help carry them to fulfillment. Not to do so is to fail seriously in our duty to others and to God Himself. It is useless and indeed blasphemous to pray for God's Kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven, unless we really mean it.

Individual peculiarities there are among men, and complications enough to be puzzling confront one who would know everything as to what ought to be done to conform our institutions and public practice to natural order and the Divine intent, but these fundamental truths are apparent. Men produce wealth as is their nature to, and three things at least they need: Freedom of access to natural opportunities, freedom to trade, transport and exchange, and freedom to enjoy their produce without unnecessary deduction by government. They who make for men these fundamental demands are certainly seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

I challenge, then, every law or custom which makes an artificial scarcity of opportunity for the production of wealth, or which restricts or penalizes exchange or industry, or which prevents free competition in that form of production involved in the gathering of products for delivery to consumers, or which takes money for public purposes from men because of their thrift or success in getting rewards for services rendered to their fellows, while neglecting to require full payments for the special privileges of land owning and franchise possession. I would raise for complete settlement the question of monopoly of natural resources, of the public highways traversed by railroads, and of the streets occupied by public service corporations. I deny that it is compatible with the possession of a religious conscience for any man to

stand in the way of reform in these matters. "God is not mocked." "No man can serve two masters."

Twenty-five years ago an American political economist and author was introduced in London to Cardinal Manning by a man who thus describes the occasion:

"I have a vision of the two profiles facing each other in the growing dusk, and I have recalled the emotion of tone in which each man made frankly to the other a sort of profession of faith. They had traveled to the same goal from opposite directions. 'I loved the people,' said the American, 'and that brought me to Christ as their best friend and teacher.' 'And I,' said the Cardinal, 'loved Christ, and so learned to love the people for whom He died.' They faced each other in silence for a moment—in silence more eloquent than words."

Let me leave these thoughts with you. If you are a sincere Christian, love your fellow-men at least enough to give them a full opportunity. Help rather than hinder this desirable condition. And if you up to this time, love your fellow-men only, love them as earnestly as the American I have referred to, Henry George, who has yet to be fully honored in his own country, and to you shall come the love of Christ which, together with your work for humanity, will bring the peace which surpasseth understanding. In either case you will seek God and His righteousness, and make way for the coming of His Kingdom, when His will shall be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

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## THE DISTRIBUTION OF LABOR AND CAPITAL.

*(For the Review.)*

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By PAUL F. JOHANNING.

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To the student of economics it is always interesting to note the changes that are taking place in the field of industry and to trace effect to cause. The causes that are leading some men to engage in the production of food, shelter or clothing and others to manufacture touring cars, steam yachts or homes and palaces, are manifold.

Under perfectly natural and just conditions, giving to all equal right and access to natural opportunities, Labor would produce food, shelter and clothing on the one hand, and luxuries on the other, according to the ability, physical and mental, of the worker. After he had provided himself with all the necessities of life and stored up some of these for a future rainy day the laborer would, no doubt, produce some luxuries if he still felt inclined to exert himself.

The desire of the worker to get the things he wants with less exertion or to get more with the same exertion has in early times been responsible for one of the first changes in the distribution of the results of his efforts; that is, it