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CONCLUSION

IT IS as if Jefferson speaks today when he wrote:

All eyes are opened, or opening, to the rights of man. The general spread of the light of science has already laid open to every view the palpable truth that the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately by the grace of God. These are grounds of hope for others.

This was written in 1826, the last year of Jefferson's life. We believe that Henry George explored these grounds of hope for others.

We claim no originality in the fundamental ideas herein expressed, unless it be some of the illustrations and applications to new conditions of the truths that George so clearly and forcefully stated in his writings and on which no man has yet improved. George did not invent a plan. We may call it that for convenience sake, but he made clear a truth which does give hope for the future.

We do not claim that it will cure all the human ills. That will never be done. We believe that it is part of the plan of the Maker of the universe that there will always be problems with which the human race will have to contend. However, we also believe and accept as a truth that God helps him who helps himself. It is therefore our duty to be ever on the outlook and search for things that will improve the conditions of mankind. Of course, for him who believes that we should leave well enough alone there can be no hope.

We believe with Jefferson that we should be slow in making changes, but to make no changes at all is to tie us down to the dead past. Fundamental principles never change. Just as in the development of science the old truths and laws of physics and mechanics were applied and discovered for the

convenience and enjoyment of the human race, so there are natural laws which govern the creation and distribution of wealth which no man can make, but do exist and need only to be discovered and then applied. Why should we not, in matters of government which affect the welfare of the human race make like progress. The reason for the slowness of this lies in the fact that changes made here affect the vested rights or interests. Or to put it in the language of the street, it affects the pocketbook and therefore it is difficult to bring about such changes, just as it was difficult to bring about the destruction of human slavery. It required four years of civil war to do that. Let us hope that we have learned from history.

People would be struck with amazement today if on Broadway, or on Main Street of any city, men would again drive their wagons with an ox team and would light their way with a candle. And yet, when it comes to the science of government (except in the establishment of political rights under the Constitution and Bill of Rights) we have made little progress. It is true that the needs and wants of the people have been recognized and we have tried to cure these through paternalism, without seeking the fundamental causes back of them. Henry George, over fifty years ago, in his *Progress and Poverty*, pointed out that this would be the result unless we conformed our man-made laws to natural laws. No wonder then that he was called "The Prophet of San Francisco."

Those who profit by the conditions as they are, appeal to the wisdom of the founding fathers. No one can, or would, detract from these. Jefferson well understood the danger that there lies in precedents and he expressed it in this language:

Some men look at constitutions with sanctimonious reverence, and deem them like the ark of the covenant, too sacred to be touched. They ascribe to the men of the preceding age a wisdom more than human, and suppose what they did to be beyond amendment. I knew that age well; I belonged to it, and labored with it. It deserved well of its country. It was very like the present, but without the experience of the present; and forty years of experience in government is worth a century of book-reading . . . I am certainly not an advocate for frequent and untried changes in laws and constitutions . . . But I know also that laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths disclosed, and manners and

opinions change with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also, and keep pace with the times. We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy, as civilized society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors.

Further he wrote:

We have not yet so far perfected our constitutions as to venture to make them unchangeable . . . But can they be made unchangeable? . . . I think not. The Creator has made the earth for the living, not the dead. Rights and powers can only belong to persons, not to things. . . . A generation may bind itself as long as its majority continues in life; when that has disappeared, another majority is in place . . . and may change their laws and institutions to suit themselves. Nothing then is unchangeable but the inherent and inalienable rights of man.

Surely there is hope when the churches assert that "the riches of the earth," belong to all nations and when the Primate of England advocates the taxation of site values. There can also be hope when those in high places say that want must be destroyed. But there can also be danger in the latter if the right method is not adopted. In fact the danger already exists, in that government instead of removing the evil that creates want, deals directly with it in such a manner that the people become subservient to the government, instead of the government to the people. Instead of having a government "for the people" we have a people for the government.

We have been criticized by some ardent Christians who asserted that it was the province of religion, and that only religion could make man better. "It does no good to educate the mind alone, the heart too must be educated." We have no fault to find with that, however, we do say that we are trying to improve conditions which will make man better, and which will help the teaching of Christian principles to bear fruit. In fact the truths that we have tried to make clear are based on Christian principles.

We maintain that we have exposed a great wrong, and that religion cannot and must not condone this wrong. More than that, true religion should denounce it as a moral wrong. In truth the Christian religion does denounce it but not the churches generally.

As it is now the monopoly of that which gives power, sometimes puts men without virtue, in the Church and in the State,

in a position of advantage over their fellow man. The possessors of wealth due to that possession alone are given an unfair superiority over those who toil to make an honest living.

Too often the privileged hide behind the Church to protect themselves from assaults against their privileges. They are willing and do support the Church in its efforts to make this a better world to live in. They know that as long as we merely preach that the spiritual is above the material, and confine our efforts to improve social conditions to moral suasion, and do not assail their privileges as morally wrong, they are safe in the enjoyment of them.

The writer is not blaming the churches any more than anyone else. We are all to blame. But the churches must recognize that society—we, the people as a whole—through our government can commit a sin, and are committing such a sin when we permit the monopolizing of a part of God's own creation—the earth—which leads to the economic serfdom of which Wilson wrote.

There are many ministers today who are awakening the people and making their congregations conscious of existing social wrongs. They understand that Christian principles must be applied to practical life. Thereby they incur the ill will of some of their members. It is, therefore, the duty, of those who believe that society through government is violating some of the great truths of Christianity, to uphold the hands of its servants who are trying to make out of Christianity a living religion. Do we deserve a better Hereafter unless we create a better Here?

A man who has to accept charity from his government as a means of subsistence is no longer a free man, but already a slave. When the system is such that the government has to step in to mitigate the injury done through inequalities in the economic security of individuals, of which they have been robbed by the existing system, then all their political freedom and inalienable rights are surrendered for that security. They cannot and will not bite the hand that is feeding them. They have sold their birth-right for a mess of pottage.

With the aid of the churches and true religion much can be done. But the churches must throw off their chains. They must come to the support of the One whose doctrines are in

accord with all that is good and fine in the teachings of Christianity, and whose whole spirit moved and prayed for the application of them.

The philosophy of Henry George is not utopian. It is a practical and common sense application of the teachings of Christianity to the every day affairs of man. They will go far in removing the inequalities that exist between man and man. And when that is done the solution of all other problems will be made much easier.

The adoption of the system herein advocated will do more than anything else to prevent the indoctrination of our people with the un-American philosophies of European countries, which we fear so much. By giving our people the opportunity to make their own living through the channels of free enterprise, we immunize them against Isms to which they might fall easy prey when such opportunity is denied them. Under such a system we would become the model for other nations instead of modeling after others as we are doing now.

Thomas Jefferson and his compatriots established political liberty; Abraham Lincoln abolished human slavery, and Henry George charted the course to economic freedom. We are at the cross-road. The light is green, and the road lies straight ahead. Let us, before it is too late, take that road out of confusion, paternalism and the many other isms, and enter the broad and well paved highway of free enterprise, individualism and liberty.