

Chapel April 15, 1930

--President Wright

Scripture Reading: St. Matthew 17 -- Verses 22-27.

In the state-wide movement to reduce taxes it is rather interesting to you and to me and to every right-minded citizen in our state that one of the first things they are talking about is the schools. I hope before you go home Easter to give you some real facts with reference to schools and the amount of money paid as taxes and amount that goes to the schools. The majority of people in our state are misinformed and we want to give them the truth. I want to give you a conception of our taxation, not taxes, but the underlying principles. It fits exactly with this passage of scripture I read this morning. The people came and asked ^{Peter Jesus} ~~Jesus~~ if ~~he~~ paid tribute--tribute means a tax--if he should pay a tax. And then Jesus spoke to Peter and asked if the children of the King paid taxes. Let me read that to you, remembering that the word tribute means tax. "-----and when he was come into the house Jesus prevented him, saying What thinkest thou Simon? of whom do the Kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children or of strangers?" The rulers of the earth--whom do they tax? Their own people, or people they have subdued? The place we are thinking of was Judea, or the home of the Jews and the rulers collected the money they needed and some more to operate the government from the people they had subdued and that has given to the world an idea that taxation is a kind of tribute we pay to some over lord, but when we first came to America from Europe and established a republic we did not go on that basis at all. We, the people of the United States placed upon ourselves a tax and upon our property a tax for the pur-

pose of operating the Government and for any other community activities that we decided to place a tax for.

What I mean is this: that we place a tax on the town of Greenville to support or maintain the light, water and sewer system, pave streets and sidewalks; place a tax on ourselves to build school houses and to educate our children--that isn't to tribute money at all. They are our community activities that we, the people, have said we are going to pay for in this way. It is an investment made by the community for the community's welfare. We have also placed upon ourselves a tax for operation of the city government, that is not the tribute idea referred to in this passage of scripture. The same kind of thing is going on all over the state that I have outlined to you, as going on in Greenville. Some counties have decided to operate their schools, and we also pay ~~that~~ ^{the} county as well as a city tax. The assessment made on the individual is determined by the amount of property he holds. We also pay our state tax and a tax for the operation of the government, but that tax is not placed on our real property. When the people in a community say, as they did in one community, " ^{WZ} [^] Do not want the next General Assembly to appropriate any money for the enlargement of any state institution, but instead reduce and cut the maintenance appropriations to the very bottom." Not one cent of that money for the enlargement or operation of any state school was collected on real property. In other words, the people in that particular community were misinformed. Their idea was to stop the state institutions from growing and make the people who attend them pay for them as nearly as possible. The constitution of the state of North Carolina provides that it shall establish a state university and make the cost to the students as nearly ^{free} ^{practicable} nothing as possible. People simply do not know the truth. I want to give you the truth, that we may carry it to all people.

You realize that last year was the worst crop year in certain sections we have had in several years. Of the forty million dollars which the farmers lost last year practically twenty per cent is in our own county--the

county in which our school is located. And yet North Carolina's income, much to the surprise of the administration of the state, was greater than it was last year. The crops were a failure but the taxes on corporations was more and enough more to make the income tax greater than it was last year. In other words, the state of North Carolina is not so poor as some people seem to think. Corporations are making more money than they made a year ago. The government has appointed a tax commission and they are working some way to make an adjustment about taxes in our state. I believe they are going to work out a plan by which the burden on real property can be relieved. It should be done but must not be done in the spirit of getting relief from paying tribute money as people use to think of it. It is in our case practically an investment, in things we want.

The increase of wealth in the United States in the last twenty or thirty years is ninety-eight percent, plus. In North Carolina it is two hundred plus percent. North Carolina in that period increased in wealth more than any other state in the Union. Yet we are so poor!

The other day I sat on my front porch and figured the number of cars going by and found that eleven out of fourteen were out of town--bore an out of town license. My estimate was that enough automobiles passed up and down Fifth Street to pay the appropriation of East Carolina Teachers College for a whole week. We are poor--gas poor. So poor we can't do anything but burn gas.

Hambone said those people out hunting for the poor people that needed relief couldn't get hold of them, because they were out in their automobiles and couldn't be found.