

Henry George, *The Man*

Following are excerpts from a talk on the above subject delivered by JOHN Z. WHITE on the occasion of the 103rd Henry George Birthday Celebration, which was held at the YMCA, 19 South La Salle Street, Chicago, September 2nd, last.

Author, philosopher and leader of the Georgist Old Guard in America, John Z. White, a warm and trusted friend of Henry George, gives evidence in these remarks that today, at 88, he retains much of the effectiveness that for fifty years gave him outstanding prominence as an able and convincing expositor of Henry George's economic philosophy.

THE FREEMAN is indebted to John Lawrence Monroe, Assistant Director of the Henry George School of Social Science in Chicago, for a transcript of the proceedings of the Chicago meeting, and to Mrs. Ann Levin for the stenotyping.

* HENRY GEORGE was not above medium height but he was perfectly formed. Dr. Henrotin, who once gave him a physical examination here in Chicago, told him that his body was as good as his mind, but he added, "Mr. George, that is where you are in danger. Most everybody has a weak spot. In case of strain these weak spots enter a protest, and the patient eases up before his resistance is sapped. But you could go to pieces all at once. Beware of strain."

Well, that is about what happened. In his last campaign I went out with him every night—his wife along. We were making short speeches; he would speak first, and I would follow. One day he said to me, "White, I won't live to see the Single Tax, but you will."

George was a crusader. He was also a statesman. When I say "crusader," I mean he hoped for an uprising, a spiritual uprising, an enthusiasm that would take possession of men throughout the world. They would see the great truth that he had revealed. But he was a statesman also. He knew the difficulties in the way. He told them, "Rowing against the current is hard work, but gliding with the current we may go far and win much ground."

When there was actual work to do he was a dynamo, sparing neither himself nor those around him, utterly reckless of expenditure of energy. Get the work done! and woe betide anyone who stood in the way. Quick, active in commendation, but equally quick and severe in condemnation when necessary, a strict disciplinarian,

a rounded man, he was complete in almost every way you could imagine. When I first met him, he looked robust and strong. When I saw him last, going out with him every night to meetings which we addressed, he was as frail as an old woman—worn.

I was with him when he said, "I am the friend of men." You know how that has been variously translated. We were in a big theatre in New York. I was speaking; he came in; I gave way. A great big fellow out in the middle of the pit came forward and called to the meeting, "Hurrah for Henry George, the workingman's friend!" And they nearly wrecked the building with their cheers. When finally they ceased, George stepped forward and said: "I do not know that I am particularly the friend of the workingman. I am the friend of men—all men—no one barred—the way is open to each and every individual."

After his funeral, we had a number of meetings in Greater New York—one large one in Brooklyn, at which Francis Adams was present.

Louis F. Post, long a loyal worker, was chairman. They called on me to talk, and I closed my remarks by quoting Robert Burns' epitaph to his father, written some fifty years before George was born. Robert Burns knew something about the land question, though he did not know the remedy. The epitaph which this Scotch boy wrote to his father, in my opinion, fits the person and character of Henry George absolutely. It reads:

"O Ye, whose cheek the tear of pity stains,
Draw near with pious rev'rence and attend!
Here lie the loving husband's dear remains,
The tender father and the gen'rous friend.

The pitying heart that felt for human woe,
The dauntless heart that feared no human pride,
The friend of man, to vice alone a foe;
For ev'n his failings leaned to virtue's side.

The friend of man, the friend of truth,
The friend of age, the guide of youth;
Few hearts like his with virtue warm,
Few heads with knowledge so informed.

If there is another world, he lives in bliss;
If there is none, he made the best of this."

Not only have land tenures an indefensible origin, but it is impossible to discover any mode by which land can become private property.

HERBERT SPENCER