

because I say I am going to give it away—and don't do it; and I am a Socialist because I believe in the common people. There you have me.—Joseph Fels.

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JOSEPH FELS.

In Service poured he out his soul to death
And lifted up Unselfishness in Life;
Taught Truth and Justice with his latest breath
And Brotherhood proclaimed instead of Strife.
—Wiley Wright Mills.



AT THE WASHINGTON CONFERENCE.

From a Private Letter, By Permission.

We were indeed sorry not to have you here. It was a very remarkable meeting, and is of unusual value to us as a remembrance since our friend Joseph Fels left us so soon after.

I am going to give you an odd impression I had during the conference. I did not speak of it to others, but I distinctly spoke of it to myself at the time. Mr. Fels was more peaceful and quiet during this conference than he had been formerly. He was a little pale, and lacked his old aggressiveness, but he was radiantly happy and moved in and out among the other members of the conference in a singularly quiet and happy and unobtrusive way. Strangely enough, it often seemed as if people did not see him, so little attention did he demand or receive, and I distinctly thought, one day just before the conference opened for the afternoon when Mr. Fels went out to call the audience and came back and walked in and out among them, I distinctly thought, I say, "Why, they don't even seem to see him." And there was just that odd effect, just as if, so it may seem to us, he were already on the threshold of the other world and were partly associating with the spirits and the angels and only partly associating with us.

I do not mean this in any mystical way. I simply mean to imply, as a reason for this odd impression, that he was not wholly in touch with us, as always formerly he had been. But he was very strongly with us in spirit, and as I said before, was radiantly happy. Over and over he came and stood by my chair and whispered in my ear something of his happiness—it was such a lovely conference; everything was going on splendidly; we were doing things; and so on. My remembrance of this is something I shall never lose, and gives me a feeling of added nearness to the world where Joseph Fels now is. May we all of us have so placid a going.

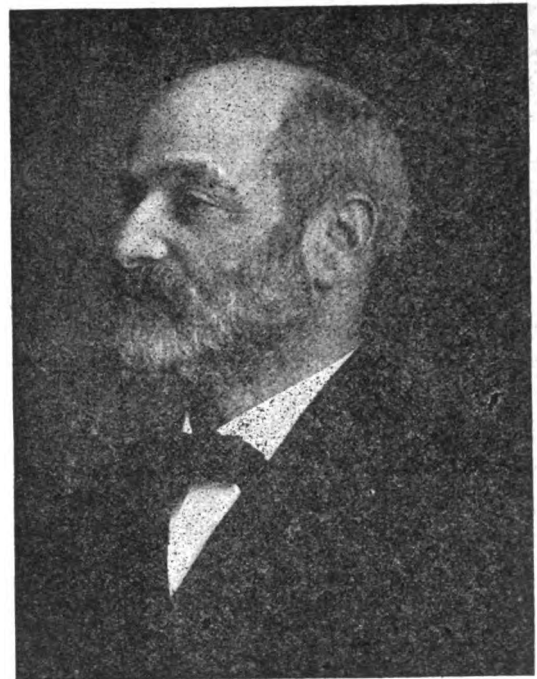
ALICE THACHER POST.

JOSEPH FELS, EVANGELIST OF FREEDOM.

Address of William Lloyd Garrison, Jr., at the Fels Memorial Meeting in Boston, March 7, 1914.

Patriots abound in every fatherland. But apostles of human freedom, whose sympathies and strivings are universal and know neither race nor creed, appear but seldom. They are revealed to mankind by their prophetic vision, born of abundant faith.

To a few men seems foreordained the duty to proclaim and interpret some new principle or ideal of world-wide human significance. To oth-



ers is granted the privilege of upholding and sustaining these noble and tragic souls. And to still others the call comes to carry forward with glowing enthusiasm the banner of a new faith after the leader and his first disciples have gone to rest.

In such a service did Joseph Fels consecrate the best and most fruitful years of his active life. To him were granted no superfluous physical advantages of presence, mien or stature. He stood humble and self-effacing, careless of outward appearance and of the niceties of speech and gesture, careless of all, save only the radiation of the great truth which he had been permitted to see and comprehend.

And what was that truth? The clear and simple message that all mankind must have equal right of access to God's earth, if a civilized society is to persist and to reflect God's image in its members. The message was conveyed by a symbol,

expressing in three brief syllables a condensed idea, thus: Singletax.

And what implied this symbol that aroused in different bosoms such varying emotions? Merely the means and method of a regenerating social evolution. But how could taxes—those baleful and hated burdens of the poor, linked in thought with death as the inevitable visitant of misfortune—how could taxes symbolize hope, justice, righteousness and freedom? Well might the mystified multitudes ask and wonder.

But here was a man who could give reasons for the faith that was in him, and could formulate a convincing answer to the general doubt and query.

"Free the land, open Nature's storehouse, remove the burden of taxes from those products which men and women create by their labor. Take instead, for the use of all, that which the presence and activities of all bring into being. Turn to that social fund which springs up from the very earth wheresoever people congregate to live and work upon it. Draw from this perennial source the public revenues which are expended to bring life-sustaining water to the home, to open the highways of travel, to establish the centers of education, and to provide and do all those necessary and accustomed services which the word *civilization* naturally implies."

This message, flashing forth with the intensity and picturesqueness of a dramatic and dynamic personality, stirred the sluggish, rebuked the faint-hearted, and inspired receptive minds with a new social faith and an awakened purpose. And through all the urging and the precept, the golden vein of humor ran—that hall-mark of imagination and poetry and true philosophy.

Heroes as well as sluggards are ever moving to the shades and sunlight of the world beyond. Fels could have gone only bravely and with a smile—but reluctantly, as a mortal who must have seen from the vantage ground of the work accomplished the magnitude of the work yet to be done. Indifferent as he was to mere laudation, he must have perceived that he had earned the thanks and won the admiration of those who understood the meaning of his service.

No formal grieving would have been his wish, but rather the taking to heart of the lesson of his life, with cheerful hopefulness and fraternal resolution, to the furthering of his undying purpose. The evangelists of freedom, like freedom itself, can never die. Henry George, profound sage and teacher of statesmen, lives on a thousand lips and in countless thoughts each new and brightening day. So Joseph Fels, apostle of practical reform, unresting, impulsive, truth-telling and spontaneous, becomes first a memory, then a tradition, and finally an elemental part of mankind's precious heritage of human freedom.

THE VISION AND JOSEPH FELS.

From a Speech by George Hughes, Delivered at the Fels-Crosby Memorial Meeting, in Kansas City, March 29, 1914.

As I look up at the photograph of Fels, and there trail through my mind the talks I have had with him and Berens and Kiefer, which have brought out so many facts and situations in the life of Fels, it brings so very close the person, the meaning and the struggle of that great man, so small in stature, so imbued with what is the chief characteristic of his race through all the ages. I seem to see him in his youth, with that colossal energy, heedless of the prejudice his being a Jew caused, looking around for how to employ his faculties so that he could obtain the wherewithal to satisfy his desires. I see the way in which he cast aside untruth, half proven facts, and irrelevant facts. I see him turning neither to the right nor to the left, but heedless of personal comfort, holding time as merely useful to produce with, to get things done with, pursuing his way to the point where we know most about him.

Things Berens said, as we drank tea together there in the Strand, convince me that owing to his wife largely, and to the innate love of facts which was the driving force in Fels, the first commandment was never far from him. It would seem he never set up the false god of the human hero to worship; that the false gods of position display and his own power had nothing but scorn from him. But it would appear that in the days he was building his fortune and position, his mind was ever questioning, seemingly getting no answer which his keen love of truth would permit him to accept in full.

And then there comes into the hidden but pulsing inner life of this man the opening note which tuned for his mind that first commandment. He and Mrs. Fels, in the semi-seclusion of a trans-Atlantic voyage, watch and are struck by the satisfaction in living of a great English Socialist. As Fels put it to me, "He was calm and contented and without envy or hatred or malice the whole of the day. He never stopped talking about social conditions, and I never saw him aware of himself or his own interest, and I *never* saw him bored." On that momentous voyage across the Atlantic, it would seem that Fels and his wife had come close to the solution of that ever-present question, that first commandment! "Thou shalt have no other Gods but me."

And then and then and then, comes what gave to us who are bound to him by common faith and to the world at large, which his brave nervous never-turning force has so advanced—his never-closing effort. Fels in his talks with Berens over in England got his clear answer—what he had looked for unconsciously all his breathing life. He got a glimpse of God, of the Creative power,