

Eulogy at Funeral of Henry George, Sr.

by Rev. Dr. Edward McGlynn

(Editors note: To the Georgists gathered August 9 at the Henry George gravesite, George Collins, Director of the Henry George School of NYC read the eulogy given at the funeral of Henry George Sr. one hundred years ago at Grand Central Palace. Extracts from the eulogy follow.)

Today this place is consecrated. We stand on the ground made sacred by one raised up by the Father in Heaven to send messages to men, messages of truth, righteousness and justice, of peace, of fraternity. He died not in the struggle for the mayoralty of New York, for that was altogether too small for him. He died in a struggle for which he had gladly, enthusiastically entered to deal blows and willingly to take blows for the rights of man, for the teaching of universal truths, for the making of better men...

He was not merely a philosopher and sage; he was a seer, a prophet, a teacher sent from God... We have heard with peculiar delight from the venerable Dr. Abbott of the Christ-like character of the man.

It was a peculiar providence of God which took this lad, Henry George, a lad with so little schooling, this printers boy, this sailor before the mast, this tramp printer looking for occupation to maintain his wife, and made him the instrument for good which he became, the messenger of a great truth. The magnificent brain in that dome-like head puzzled over economic truths, while his heart was torn with grief at the sight of poverty and misery and crime he met on every side...

Yes, that wondrous brain was filled with an idea. It was battling with those questions while his tender heart was made sore with inadequate answers he received from the petty textbooks of political economy, books whose authors confessed their ignorance and caused political economy to be called the dismal and dreary science.

Surely it was divine providence that raised up such a man so that dying as he had died, the whole world is shocked. In all civilized lands, in many half-civilized lands, wherever the name Henry George has gone, the world's heart has ceased to beat a moment. His works have been read by millions of people in every language, and in every clime Henry George speaks to humanity today...

Indeed it were a pity such a man should be elected mayor of New York. It was well that he was spared the ignoble

strife and the dull care of mere administrative office... I repeat, no administrative office was worthy of the spirit of this seer, of this poet, of this prophet, of this messenger from God. He died just when he should have died, just as he ought to have died.

It is a great thing to be a preacher, to hold the hearts and minds of men. If we follow our hearts to what he has said, it will bring us to the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. It is a greater and better thing to be an apostle. It is still greater to add to the character of an apostle that of a crusader. But it is the greatest and best thing in the preacher, the apostle, or the crusader to have died for his faith... Henry George, by dying for his faith, has become a martyr.

He had the lion's heart, the heart of a hero. But like all great or lion-hearted men, there was added to him much of the woman—he had the patience, the forgiveness, of the sweetest, gentlest and best woman. It was that loving heart of his that grieved over the sin and misery he saw. How could it all be under the guidance of a loving father?

But when he had solved the riddle, as no other man had been able to solve it, and discovered the truth, the cause of all that misery and sin, then he was at peace. In the

concluding chapter of that immortal work of his, *Progress and Poverty*, he made a confession and a profession. He says that the faith that was dead within him had revived. Yes, he says, God is the best of Fathers, and has provided well for his children... It is not the niggardliness of nature, but the criminality and stupidity of man that makes the apparent scarcity...

That immortal work was enough, and it was impossible for a man whose heart has not been hardened, to read it without arising from its pursuit better and purer. Or else becoming a worse man for hardening his heart to the truth contained therein.

This man so peculiarly sent of God, not only to this country and this generation but to all countries and all generations yet to come, should he occupy the commonplace office of Mayor of New York, or President of the United States? We hope and pray for that reign of peace foretold by the prophets, that Kingdom of Heaven, that surely must be preceded by the Kingdom of God on earth. In that day all will honor the patriotism of this man, and the name of Henry George will be revered...

Editor's note: More comprehensive coverage on Rev. Edward McGlynn and St. Stephen's church will be featured in the Nov.-Dec. 1997 issue of GroundSwell.