

CHAPTER FROM THE BOOK:

THE FOUNDATIONS OF FREEDOM: THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

A Series of Essays on the Taxation of Land Values

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The Light That Broke on Henry George

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"I saw an Angel where they saw a Man."—Whittier.

It is not difficult to recognize throughout "Progress and Poverty" the deep religious feeling of the writer. His moral earnestness, his love of justice, his transparent intellectual honesty, his singleness of heart, his profound religious enthusiasm, are traceable on every page. But in this "Conclusion," written after the great book was practically finished, the veil may be said to be withdrawn, and the depth of the prophet's soul disclosed." Out of this enquiry has come to me something I did not think to find, and a faith that was dead revives."

As his biographer writes, "It is to the termination of the work that chief attention will turn. . . . This was not a mere rhetorical flourish, a splendid peroration to an elevated argument. His soul's message was going out to the world. He had made the long, hard struggle to find the Truth and to tell it. Would the Truth prevail? He understood the conditions that beset it, and he answered: 'Ultimately, yes. But in our own times, or in times of which any memory of us remains, who shall say?' He made a supreme appeal to those 'who in their heart of hearts have taken the cross of a new crusade; ' to those who seeing the Truth 'will toil for it; suffer for it; if need be, die for it.'" He had been engaged, and he knew that he had been engaged, in opening up a vision of the will of God, as it is in heaven, as it is in His Kingdom, as it is in that Natural Order, to which Human Society must bring itself to conform, or suffer, and progressively suffer, until it does. But he knew, as every Christian seer knows, that the way to the heart of Human Society is through the faith and self-sacrificing work of individual pioneers, who are prepared, if so it be, one after another, to be of the number of those, who have "died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar." The spirit which dictated this "Conclusion" of "Progress and Poverty" is the spirit which glows in that glorious eleventh chapter of Hebrews.

A transcription of the two following passages from our author's other writings, breathing the same religious spirit of faith and courage, may not unfitly bring these few notes to an end.

"What, after all, is there in life, as compared with a struggle like this ? Is not the noblest and the best use we can make of life to do something to make better and happier the condition of those who come after us? We have a long fight and a hard fight before us. Possibly, probably, for many of us, we may never see it come to success. But what of that? It is a privilege to be engaged in such a struggle. This we may know, that it is but a part of that great, world-wide, long-continued struggle in which the just and the good of every age have been engaged; and that we, in taking part in it, are doing something in our humble way to bring on earth the Kingdom of God, to make the conditions of life for those who come afterward, those which we trust will prevail in heaven."

"The glow of dawn is in the sky. Whether it come with the carol of larks or the roll of the war-drums, it is coming—it will come. The standard that I have tried to raise may be torn by prejudice and blackened by calumny; it may now move forward, and again be forced back. But, once loosed, it can never again be furled! To beat down and cover up the truth that I have tried to make clear, selfishness will call on ignorance. But it has in it the germinative force of truth, and the times are ripe for it. If the flint oppose it, the flint must split or crumble. Paul planteth and Apollos watereth, but God giveth the increase. The ground is ploughed; the seed is set; the good tree will grow. So little now, only the eye of faith can see it. So little now; so tender and so weak 1 But sometime, the birds of heaven shall sing in its branches: sometime, the weary shall find rest beneath its shade."