

VIEW FROM THE TOWER

Slowly and surely the morning dawns; slowly and surely the present kingdoms and powers of this world will crumble and fall before the heavenly King and kingdom. Slowly and surely the „strong man” is bound in his own house by the stronger one now present—”as a thief”—unobserved; and his house is being broken up.—Matt. 24:43.

In the midst of the confusion of strikes and riots here and abroad during the past month, it is interesting to note the view of the situation taken by some of the leading secular journals. For though the religious press is most timid and slowest to see and recognize present truth in any form, and while some of the secular papers pander to the prejudices of one class or the other, there are some which take a very correct and liberal view of both sides. We perhaps cannot do better than give extracts from some of these. One says:—

„There are in this country about seven and a half million persons employed as tillers of the soil; more than three and a half million mechanics, and nearly two million others occupied in trade and commerce, together making a total of over thirteen million people engaged in productive industry. Then we have a few more than four million professional men and others connected with the professions. Now what if this thirteen millions of industrial population should nearly all become so intelligent and reasonable as to conclude to cooperate for the welfare of the whole body, instead of pursuing their animal instincts as they now do, and acting upon the principle that every man shall get all he can of every other man, and keep all he gets. Would it not be a glad and glorious day for this struggling world of ours?

„We are among the increasingly large number of enthusiastic people who believe the day is coming and will soon be ushered in when humanity shall co-operate for the general good of all, and that the grab system of the past, still in practice, shall gradually give place to a state of society the chief purpose of which will be to really protect the weakest as well as the strongest member from all harm, and when human nature will have far less of the animal and much more of the intellectual in it than is now manifested.

„Rich men are becoming interested in the condition and welfare of the multitudes of the poor who are trying, in their way, as best they can, to climb up to and live upon higher ground. They are getting tired of the life-struggle necessary to get and to keep an amount of wealth wholly out of proportion to the possible needs of the most extravagant desires, simply for the vulgar purpose of gratifying their vanity, or pride, or lust, or power. The number of wealthy men who realize that

getting money merely for the sake of the money, and then standing guard over it all their lives, is about as mean, debasing and slavish an occupation as an intelligent human being can be engaged in for the twenty or thirty years of active business life that is possible, is increasing. Such men are looking about them and honestly trying to find what is best to be done to help their fellow-men. And they are succeeding very well indeed, and doing a great deal.

„Another evidence of the fact that brains are in bloom is found in the position occupied by the great body of wage workers organized and organizing at this time, and in the manner in which they proceed to secure what they conceive to be their rights. They meet with their employers through delegates representing them, and clothed with necessary power to act as shall seem best for the interests of the whole body whose representatives they are. They are the intellectual equals of those with whom they confer, and in all respects are competent to deal with the questions at issue. The day is past in this country when wage workers, as a class, go before wage payers as suppliants seeking the dispensation of favors at the hands of the employers. They meet and confer on equal terms. It is the day of decency on both sides, the exercise of reason, and the pursuit of justice. Failures will occur, and wrongs on both sides will be done, but the principle is established and in the end it will work out the peaceable fruits of righteousness.”

Much of the above is very true, but on the whole the picture presented is not truthful—it is too roseate, too bright entirely. It is true that some of the wealthy earnestly desire the elevation of their less fortunate fellow creatures, and it is true that many of the wage-workers are now using their brains for their social and financial advancement; but it is equally true, that selfishness on the part of the masses of both these classes will conflict with and upset the best laid plans for the common welfare and peace. Hence it will yet be found in the end, as the Scriptures have foretold, that the Golden age of blessing—the Millennial age will be ushered in not smoothly, and quietly, by arbitration and without strife, but by „a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation.” A „day of wrath,” a „day of vengeance,” a day of „distress,” ushers in the glorious day of peace and righteousness—the day for which we have so longed, and prayed „Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

The trouble will come, because each class will feel that it has rights which the other selfishly refuses in full measure to recognize. The striking spirit, begotten of real as well as fancied and unreal wrongs and rights, begotten in turn of an increase of intelligence ignorantly presumes that it grasps the entire situation, and can fully and quickly remedy the evils. Only time will demonstrate to these the truth from the error, on this subject, and the utter impossibility of imperfect, depraved men forming a perfect order of government—the impossibility of any class of selfish men ruling their fellow-men unselfishly.

Men are beginning to see that Love and Justice must rule the world hand in hand, ere full blessings can come to all; but they will not learn until by bitter experience in this struggle already commenced, that the law and rule they desire is not to come from depraved humanity, but from the establishment of the kingdom of heaven, when God's will shall be done on earth as in heaven."

Nevertheless these throes of anguish which pass over the world by spells, these efforts which grow more severe each time—"as travail upon a woman"—are the very means by which God's Word declares He intends to lead mankind into the desired blessings; proving to them the necessity for and advantage of his kingdom, and overthrowing the powers which for so long he has permitted, to do the best they could at governing, but whose grandest efforts are now proving failures.

That the world is beginning in some measure to see that we are in the great day of the Lord's presence, and that they see him coming in the trouble clouds which each year become more dense, is evident from much that is being written at the present time, of which the two extracts below are samples. We cannot doubt that the Scriptural views of this question, and of the hopes beyond the struggle, advanced through the TOWER and its ten thousand readers—scattered in every nook and corner of civilization, has had something to do with the clearness of views expressed by the writers of these extracts, who are unknown to us.

One under the caption, „The Coming Armageddon,” says:—

„There is no issue before the American people so insistent for solution as the relation between labor and capital. Daily it becomes more evident that we will have to rearrange the methods which have done very well and very ill for a number of centuries, as long as the power lay upon one side and the weakness upon the other. The times are changing, and we must change with them. Out of this ruinous and suicidal conflict between the workers and the corporations we must come, at the end, to a settlement which will recognize the altered industrial condition of the people. We are drifting away from feudalism socially as surely as politically. Our progress has not stopped. The stream of tendency whereby all things make for righteousness' seems to be now hurrying us to utter ruin. But this is a seeming, not a reality. Out of this ebullient cauldron will be crystallized sooner or later a compromise that will stand as long as it is worthy, and will dissolve away again, as our present system is dissolving, when it becomes unworthy. The pity of it is that we can only reach peace through a bitter and disastrous struggle, of which the present strike is simply an affair of outposts—a skirmish in the dark. Upon the one side is ranged class prejudice, vested rights, and the money of the land. Over against these stand arrayed a multitude, but dimly awake to the possibilities of its power, an army outnumbering the hordes that followed the Asiatic conquerors. An Armageddon is to be fought, fraught with ruin to both victors and vanquished."

Ah, yes! the stream of tendency would long since have wrecked the poor frail bark of human government,

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had not God himself been holding the supervision of all, and saying to the fierce passions and ambitions of Alexanders, Napoleons and Caesars, Thus far, and no further! And now, thank God, we see that though the present civilization is to go to complete wreck, it will not occur until she has struck upon the shores of the everlasting kingdom of Him „whose right it is” (Ezek. 21:27), and where, no more subject to the tossings of selfishness and ambition, all the families of the earth shall be blessed under the rule of the Prince

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of Peace.

The other clipping is entitled „An Age of Antagonisms,” and runs as follows:—

„When the condition of all enlightened nations is looked into, and the widening antagonisms waged in them brought to view, it looks as if modern civilization were nearing its crisis. The very structure of human society is not only boldly and rudely challenged, but menaced with dislocation. Agencies, forces and interests that have slumbered side by side for ages have waked up to find themselves enemies, and other agencies, forces and interests that have been working together heretofore in a mutually advantageous co-operation, now find themselves precipitated against one another in mortal conflict. That the old dispute between religion and science should have broken out afresh and be waged with desperate vehemence and spirit is not surprising perhaps, in an age remarkable for bounding intellectual vigor, research and unsparing criticism; but this is only one phase of a warfare that pervades every department of life. Labor against capital and capital against labor; combinations of producers against consumers and counter combinations of consumers against producers; pooled railroads against shippers and shippers against the railroads; proletarianism against property; anarchism against public order—these are the conspicuous phases of a world-wide strife which extends to the smaller matters of life and breaks out in quarrels about what we shall, and what we shall not eat and drink; quarrels over ritual worship, hostility to the public schools, butchers’ leagues against the transportation of dressed meat, and leagues of small dealers in specialties against the great bazaars that are breaking down their business.

Society is organizing itself into combinations and fraternities for offence and defence, and fealty to these has grown into a sentiment before which patriotism, friendship and even religion are

beginning to bend. We see no revolutions and insurrections—and it is probable that these will be avoided—for new agencies less violent and quite as effective have been discovered. Numbers combine against an individual or corporation, and by means of a boycott, deliberately resolved on and pitilessly and persistently enforced, reduce the victim to submission. The formidable tendency towards an oppressive centralization is desperately resisted by organized and artificial efforts in behalf of disintegration—and so it comes about that society is confronted with problems which its own constitution and experience furnish no solution for, and before which rulers, cabinet ministers, statesmen and economists confess their helplessness.

It is not possible at present to foretell what this strife will result in. Its universal prevalence is a symptom that society is not satisfied with itself, and modern civilization, so productive of human triumphs over the forces of nature, is still attended with conditions profoundly unsatisfying.”

Only from our stand point can the sunshine on the other side the darkness, be clearly seen. Only from the stand point which recognizes the Lord’s presence,—that we are now in The Day of the Lord—is there ground for rejoicing. Lift up your heads ye saints of the Lord, for your redemption draweth nigh; the sufferings of Christ are nearly ended, the glory soon shall follow. Then „the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it” and be blessed under it.

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— April, 1886 —