

VIEW FROM THE TOWER.

How few there are who put together and see the relationship of those three statements of the prophet Daniel: (1) "*Many shall run to and fro*" [referring to the general and rapid intercommunion between the people of earth]; and (2) "*Knowledge shall be increased*" [the direct consequence of the intermixture of various peoples and their various ideas]; and (3) "*There shall be a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation.*"

Many who can see that the great and general increase of knowledge, of our day, is the result of the interchange of thought among the people – by means of printing, railroads, telegraphs, etc., etc. – fail to see that this very increase of knowledge is not producing happiness and contentment, but that, on the contrary, it is producing discontent and unhappiness; and this increasingly, as the knowledge increases; so that ere long it will lead to a fratricidal strife, and in general to just what the prophet has foretold – "a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation."

It can not be denied that the grandfathers of the present generation, with a less degree of general intelligence than their children of to-day, with fewer of the comforts, conveniences and luxuries, were much more contented, and hence really much happier, than their children who possess these favors which are the results of increased knowledge. Shall we conclude, then, that knowledge is an injurious thing, and not a blessing?

The negroes of the South were probably happier fifty years ago, in slavery, than they now are; and though now possessed of many more privileges than were ever before accorded them, yet the reports are that a race war, between blacks and whites, is to be feared. It was an increase of knowledge that led public sentiment to a repudiation of human slavery and that emancipated the slaves; and it is a

fuller *knowledge* of his rights as a man, under the law of God, and as a citizen, under the Constitution of these United States, that is stirring within the hearts of the negroes a desire for more and more, until they shall feel satisfied that they have their full proportion of the rights, privileges and common blessings of our day.

Is knowledge an evil thing, an injury to society, then, we again ask?

Many would answer, "Yes, it is an evil thing: the lower classes of society would be wholly ungovernable, if all class-distinctions were obliterated, if they were not under the wholesome *restraints* at present exercised by society, which is well supported by the nominal church, which in turn is well upheld by the most intelligent, influential and most wealthy element of society. If the priestcraft and superstitions of the dark ages are vanishing before the greater intelligence of the nineteenth century, something must be found as a substitute therefor, else *we* shall lose the control of society; the masses will become so independent and dictatorial that we will be hindered from carrying on our governmental and business plans, which, while they have accrued to our own [R1143 : page 1] interest, specially and chiefly, were really better for the masses too, as evidenced by the growth of their ambition and discontent as their knowledge and privileges are increased. 'Let us put on the brakes! Let us stop the spread of knowledge or it will wreck our social fabric!'"

And to this expression the Papacy would breathe a fervent (though inaudible) "Amen!" and reflect upon its glorious career in the dark ages when priestcraft and superstition held full sway, and the pope was owned to be "another god on earth." And many nominally Protestants, some of them earnest, intelligent persons, would take a similar view, except that they would like to preserve the intelligence and liberty of the educated and wealthy, remembering with dread the time when Papacy held such control that even their classes dared scarcely to think, let alone to act or speak.

Our answer to the question is, The fault lies in the imperfection of the social fabric and not with the increasing knowledge which threatens to wreck it. True, a knowledge that is only *partial* may for a while work more harm than good; for as some one has said –

"A little knowledge is a dangerous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring."

It would be better for all concerned, if full, absolute knowledge were general; all would then be more quickly adjusted, no doubt; the struggle would be shorter and sharper, and a new arrangement of human affairs, a new social fabric, suited to the increased knowledge and recognizing every individual's rights to the fullest extent, would supersede the present order. But this is not possible: knowledge must come gradually and individually; God's "*due time*" has come for knowledge to be increased, but he will not bring it about miraculously but by natural means, such as the "running to and fro" of men and ideas. God's method will not only bring about the great time of trouble predicted, but it will also give mankind a valuable and lasting lesson on *justice*, which will enable each, thereafter, to look fairly upon another's rights as well as his own, when their interests differ.

The result of God's method of introducing knowledge will be that the old social fabric in the hands of the small class of favored ones – intellectually, financially and politically – will endeavor to remain, to continue itself upon the old lines and principles; – merely stretching itself a little more to accommodate itself to the increasing pressure from expanding ideas of the people in general. Yet all the while, its general structure prevents its expansion much beyond its present limits, and each increase of pressure from within adds to the strain upon both the people and the present social structure. The present liberty and privilege and share of earth's blessings accorded to mankind in general would have been grand and benevolent beyond appreciation in the "dark ages," but now it fetters and frets the masses, because knowledge has increased; and they will continue to fret and strike and plot until *in everything* they have their full share of all

blessings, comforts, privileges, advantages and liberties as men; as common heirs of the world and its *natural* advantages. In this the masses respond to the principle of *selfishness*; even as the upper class of society, actuated by a similar *selfishness*, seeks not only to hold present wealth (which is at least an excusable weakness,) but also to perpetuate the present social structure which so greatly favors the already favored class.

It is the new wine in the old wine-skins (Matt. 9:17) over again: it is the new principles, of justice and equality among men, the principles which must prevail during the Millennial age, that are now stretching the old system of things and which ultimately will burst and destroy the present social order in a period of troubles, disaster and anarchy. What lessons both parties will learn, regarding each other's worth and rights in that dark day! Thank God, his children are also advised by his Word of the glorious Day to follow, in which society shall be reorganized (the "*new* earth") under the blessed influence of the Lord and the glorified Church (the "*new* heavens"), upon a basis of fullest justice to all, – under the gracious provisions of the New Covenant.

* * *

Many conscientious and even benevolent minds fail to see wherein the present social structure is unfair, or wherein it grants greater privileges to one than to another; and in amazement they inquire: "Do you mean to suggest that all who, by careful, prudent living, by industry and temperance in all things, have accumulated a few hundred or a few thousand dollars for their old age, that they may not be chargeable to any, should divide this product of industry and frugality with others who have been too indolent to work, or who have wasted their earnings in a wild, profligate course, and who would soon waste also the accumulations of others to their own injury?"

No; such a view is held by few – by very few, if any, even among the reckless, professed anarchists. It is too much the case that people

who are being actually pinched by want, and who have a little money laid aside for old age or "a rainy day," feel that their interests lie across the path of any social reorganization; and such too often dismiss all suggestions that the present social structure is imperfect and could be improved upon for the general good – for the benefit of the poorer class – without doing any *injustice* to the wealthier class; without interfering with a single one of their *rights* or a single dollar they already possess. Although, we confess, such a just and equitable re-adjustment of the laws would make it less possible for a few to become suddenly very wealthy, or others equally industrious and sober and careful to become miserably poor.

But our overly-conservative friend further inquires: "Is not the present social arrangement a necessity? What would the miserably poor do if it were not for the benevolence of the rich? How could railroads and large manufacturing establishments be built and conducted were it not for the immensely wealthy class?"

We answer: There are plenty of people who have sufficient intelligence to conduct [R1143 : page 2] large manufactories, railroading, etc. Our United States Government is a practical illustration of the principle; and the Postoffice department is another. Where private interest and competition alone control, selfishness is sure to prevail. And the result must be to reduce labor to the lowest point and keep it there; and to produce combinations and trusts, to offset competition and add thereby to the wealth and influence of those who have capital, and to keep at the foot of the ladder those who have none. Nor would a reconstruction in this line imply the same reward for unskilled, uneducated labor as for skill and education: we have this also illustrated in the Government and in the Postoffice, where various salaries are paid according to proficiency and ability, but where selfishness and greed can reduce none to starvation wages, or unhealthy conditions, or oppressive over-work.

That something is radically wrong with society as at present organized all must admit. It was probably at one time as good an

arrangement as could have been made, and doubtless served a good purpose; but its usefulness has been outgrown with the general increase of knowledge. And instead of endeavoring to curb knowledge, in order that people may be happy and contented under the old conditions, we should increase the knowledge and change the social conditions to correspond.

Look, for instance, at the great London strike; in which the laborers about the docks and wharfs are seeking to improve their condition, just a little. Note the reply of the managers of the Docking Company: that, though the advance asked was not very large for each laborer, yet, there being so large a number of them, it would mean a large sum of money in the aggregate, equaling the interest on a very large sum. If the small increase of salary to each man were granted, it would reduce the dividends of the Dock Company, and thus depreciate their property. But who or what is this Dock Company? It is a corporation which, by investing capital in building docks for shipping, in the port of London, long since gained a monopoly of the suitable water-front of the city, and which doubtless long since repaid to the investors the original investment with good interest and has probably "watered" its stock several times, but still maintains its hold upon its franchises; and which long ago ground down its laborers, who are of the poorest class of London's poor, to as little as would enable them barely to live, in order that its managers could return larger and larger dividends to the share-holders. And now, notwithstanding the increase of general blessings, conveniences and knowledge, the managers and stockholders would selfishly reap all the benefits, and would deny the poor laborers any. And their fear is not only for the present increase demanded, but for the future. They know that even at the advance the laborers are not sufficiently paid, and they fear another and another demand. "Give them an inch and they will want an ell" is the saying, and it is true; and inch by inch it must be given, until they get all that their labor and skill honestly entitle them to, which is not less than an economical but a comfortable living.

Around those very docks of London charitable people have for years kept up cheap restaurants, and coffee and lunch wagons, from which many of these poor were supplied with one or two meals per day at much less than the cost of the food – one cent for a bowl of soup and one cent for a tin of pudding. These charitable arrangements speak loudly of sympathizing hearts who helped supply the additional cost, as well as of those of the [R1144 : page 2] attendants who take turns in giving their time to the benevolent work of serving these stalls, wagons, etc. Doubtless some who hold stock in the Dock Company, and who draw their dividends, use a portion in this or in some other "sweet charity," and thus show the noble side of their hearts. But, such should realize that the proper thing to do is, to so right and reconstruct society and its laws that such men as are industrious should be enabled to work, and that at such a moderate compensation as would enable them to have enough to eat without appealing to charity. There will be much less need for "sweet charity" (though still plenty of room for it) when *sweet justice* comes to be rightly seen and practiced.

In this land, though justice is not yet quite even-handed, and though the laws have not yet been fully arranged to thwart monopolies and trusts, there is certainly much less room for complaint of injustice as well as much less opportunity for charity. It is in the old world that the greatest changes must be expected. Nor is it in England alone, or even specially, that the foretold "trouble" is brewing, as a result of growing intelligence and the effort of the masses to secure a fuller share of the bounties and blessings of our day: our readers saw recently in the secular press accounts of the greatest strike of coal-miners ever known in Germany. So intense was the feeling, and so widespread the strike, that a revolution was feared, if the poorer classes got to see their strength, and the Emperor of Germany condescended to assist in compromising the difficulty. The following, clipped from the *New York Tribune*, gives a picture of the condition of things in another part of Europe: –

"Standing in one of the ante-rooms leading to the office of the Mayor of the city of Amsterdam on a January morning four years ago, a spectacle was presented which seems to an American citizen a proof that the Millennium has not yet arrived. The previous afternoon a meeting of the unemployed laboring men had been held in Vondel's Park, and the crowd was so immense that the city authorities became alarmed with the thought that a bread riot might take place at the close of the meeting, so the Burgomeester issued a proclamation informing the people that his office would be open for audience on the following day. Never before in the history of that city had an interview of the working-men with the Chief Magistrate been allowed; a certain proof of the sombre political atmosphere overhanging Amsterdam. The City Hall was overflowing with a crowd of pale, emaciated-looking men, holding in their hands certificates signed by the Prefects of Police that the bearer was actually in sore need of bread. According to the official list, signed by the Mayor's secretary, 2,243 certificates of this description were handed in that day. "The streets leading to the City Hall were crowded with women and children, and when at 4 o'clock in the afternoon the city fathers gave orders to distribute 1,500 loaves of bread, the scenes enacted defy description. Men and women fought like ravenous beasts to obtain a loaf of bread, and in fifteen minutes the supply was exhausted. In the Leydsche Straat, an American lady inquired the cause of the multitude of men, women and children rushing as if demented toward a common centre of the city. Being informed that the amount of bread given out at the City Hall had not half supplied the hungry ones, she entered a bake shop and bought out the stock on hand. Seven hundred and three loaves of bread were passed out the door to the people, who by their instant sampling of the gift, proved that dry bread was an absolute necessity to them.

"The city press in general deplored the situation of affairs, but being under the strict surveillance of the Government, were very careful to express their thoughts in guarded language. It was stated that a woman with three little children was found in a small room actually starved to death, her husband being unable to procure bread by labor

and being too proud to beg for his dying family. Below this statement in the same newspaper column was a notice that the Foreign Missionary Society at their meeting the night previous had raised 25,000 gulden (\$10,000) to supply the foreign field. To give the starving workmen of Amsterdam something to do seemed not so necessary as to supply the inhabitants of Africa with Bibles and missionaries, and yet Americans wonder that European workmen become socialists."

*

*

*

How often the generous and the selfish elements of fallen men are thus displayed side by side. The \$10,000 raised for the heathen, to help keep some of them, as the donors doubtless supposed, out of an eternity of torment, speak of a sympathy which we must commend; while the hungry thousands at their own doors speak of unjust social regulations and laws, and of a selfishness on the part of the wealthy class which, seeing this, refuses or neglects to rectify those laws, lest its own march to greater wealth and perhaps further subscriptions for foreign missions should be interfered with.

In our next issue we may point out briefly some of the defects of present social laws and customs, but suffice it now that we have pointed out that the trouble now gathering, described by Daniel as "a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation," is coming just as he, under divine guidance, foretold – as the result of interchange among men and the consequent increase of knowledge, as we are now witnessing it on every hand.

Just a word of exhortation: To the few brethren who have means, and to all according to ability, we would say – Remember first of all to practice justice in all your conduct; then be as charitable as the Master's funds in your hands will in your judgment permit of. Remember that you are merely a steward and are to handle the Lord's money according to his will as nearly as you can know it. The poorer brethren we exhort to peace, patience and charity. This conflict is not

one in which the saints are to take part: it is the world's part in the "Battle of the Great Day." Our part in the conflict is to uphold God's Word, truth against error; and we will have plenty to do in our own quarter, if faithful. Even if you feel that you are being unjustly dealt with, do the best you can, but live peaceably. The Lord will avenge any wrongs you may suffer, so far as that part is concerned; and in any case we can look with a great deal of sympathy upon the selfish, remembering and pitying their fallen condition and rejoicing that the grand time of righteousness and restitution is nigh, even at the doors.
