

VIEW FROM THE TOWER.

EVEN the dullest minds are becoming convinced that there is something peculiar about our day; that the civilization of competition – a selfish civilization – has been tried in the balances of experience and is found wanting; that the more general the intelligence on that line, the sharper the competition between the classes whose selfish interests oppose each other; and that, as iron sharpens iron, so the selfish energy of each class sharpens the opposing class, and makes ready for the great "day of slaughter" – the utter wreck of the present social structure.

Worldly people not only see the great "battle" approaching, but they see that the skirmishing is already beginning all along the line – in every civilized country and on every imaginable issue. Their attitude is well described by our Lord's words; – "Men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." – Luke 21:26.

The child of God sees the same things; but, being forewarned of them, he knows their import, their foreordained blessed results. Therefore he can lift up his head and rejoice, realizing that these dark clouds are the harbingers of coming Millennial blessings – that they mark the approach of the deliverance of God's saints, their exaltation to power as God's Kingdom, and the blessing of all the families of the earth through that Kingdom.

It may be claimed with truth that the world as a whole never was so rich as to-day; that the masses never lived so comfortably as to-day – never were so well housed, clothed and fed as to-day. But we answer: (1) The taste of luxury which the masses have had has only whetted their appetites for more; and (2) the things considered luxuries thirty years ago are esteemed necessities of life under the higher

intelligence to which "the day of the Lord's preparation" has awakened the world.

When the world was generally asleep, the aristocratic class ruled it with comparative ease; for not only ignorance, but superstition also, assisted. If the people began to awaken religiously, and to question the power of pope and clergy, the aristocracy reproved them for their ignorance on religious subjects and awed them into submission to one or another party. If the people began to get awake on political questions, and to doubt the propriety of submitting themselves to the rule of some particular family – if they questioned the greater ability of some "royal" family to rule, or its right to perpetuate its control through unworthy members – aristocracy, always fearing some abridgment of its "vested rights," has upheld even insane royalty, lest, if the principle were overthrown, the people should get awake, and aristocracy should suffer directly or indirectly.

Hence, royalty and aristocracy appealed to pope and clergy – expecting from them the favor, co-operation and support which they received: the ecclesiastics assured the people that their kings and emperors ruled them by divine appointment, and that to oppose their rule would be to fight against God. **[R1605 : page 4]**

But now all this is changed: the people are awake on every issue – political, religious and financial – and are challenging everything and everybody; and financial, political and religious rulers are willing to sacrifice each other for self-interest, and are kept busy guarding their own peculiar interests, often opposing each other to gain popular support.

Look at Papacy: note her attitude toward the French Republic – her praise of and friendship for republican principles. Who does not know that Papacy has been more insulted and opposed by France than by any other nation – by the present Republic, too? Who cannot see that the policy of Rome is to-day, as it always has been, hierarchical and monarchical, and opposed to the liberties of the people? Yet now

Papacy extols the Republics of France and the United States to win the sympathies of the people and to hide the records of history. Her design is to draw to herself the opposing classes, deceiving both.

The German government has felt the influence of the pope's smiles and kind words for its enemy, France. The growth of socialism, too, bids it beware of overthrow at home, and in dire necessity the German government appeals to the Roman Catholic party for aid in legislation to checkmate the Socialist party. The price of the support is: the repeal of laws framed some years ago expelling Jesuits, a class of Romish intriguers and clerical politicians which has been expelled or restrained by nearly every civilized nation. And now it seems that Germany must take back the Jesuits to restrain the Socialist influence.

On the other hand, Italy, Mexico, Brazil and other strongly Roman Catholic nations are awaking to the fact that the Jesuits had drained their treasuries and were the real rulers and owners of everything, and now they are removing their yokes and confiscating their wealth to the use of the despoiled people.

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The union between money and politics is of a closer sort, because, if the rulers be not wealthy, they hope to be so soon. Vested rights **[R1606 : page 4]** *must* support government; for, without government vested rights would soon be divested. And governments must support vested rights for similar reasons. Indeed, there is great

force in the argument that the *poorest* government is very much better than *no* government.

All can see as quite probable, that which the Bible declares will soon be; viz., that although wealth and religion will unite with the governments for their mutual protection, all will by and by fall together before the poor and discontented masses.

Already the power is in the hands of the masses in Europe; already they see that their condition is an almost hopeless one, so far as any rise above present conditions is concerned: the few have the power, the honor, the wealth, and the brains and education to hold on to these. They see no hope under present social regulations, and they want a change. Some hope for the change by moderate means; as, for instance, the Belgian general strike, which stagnated all business, to secure political privileges. The success of that strike has encouraged the masses of Austria-Hungary to hope for similar political privileges by a similar method; and such a strike is now threatened there.

Others seem to realize that in any mental struggle the educated and wealthy classes have the advantage; and that, in the end, only a revolution of force will succeed. These are as yet a small minority, but very active. In Spain, France, England, Germany and Austria, as well as in Russia, crazy anarchists fruitlessly dash themselves to pieces against the ramparts of society. Why do not the masses overturn the present social order and establish a new and more equitable one?

Because as yet they are only half awake, and do not realize their power; because they are yet held by the chains of reverence – true and superstitious; and because they lack competent leaders in whom they can have confidence. Reverse the order of the classes and their numbers – put the educated and wealthy ones [R1606 : page 5] in the place of the poor, and the poor of to-day in the place and power of the rich, and there would be a world-wide revolution within a week.

It will probably be some twelve years or so future; but sooner or later the masses will get thoroughly awake, the chains of reverence, true and false, will break, the fit leaders will arise, and the great revolution will be a fact.

In the United States the case differs considerably from what it is in Europe. Place the masses here upon the same footing with those in Europe, and there would be a revolution immediately; because the masses here are more intelligent – more awake. The restraining power here is a different one. Here, not only has prosperity been great, but opportunities to rise to competency or even wealth have been so general that selfishness has kept the masses in line, – in support of vested rights, etc., under the present social arrangement.

But the present financial depression shows how quickly the sweets of the present arrangement might become the bitter of a social revolution, if once the hopes and opportunities of accumulating wealth were taken out of the question.

The farmers of the West, who eagerly mortgaged their farms and promised a large interest for the favor, and who in some instances speculated with the money, are now many times angered almost to anarchism when the mortgages on their farms are foreclosed according to contract.

Miners, artisans and laborers are embittered in soul as they see wages drop and their hopes of owning little homes of their own vanish. They realize that somehow they must forever be dependent upon the favored few possessed of superior brains and more money, who, with machinery, can earn daily many times what their employees, who operate their machines, can earn. Love and the grace of God are either lacking or at least none too abundant in their hearts, and selfishness in them inquires, Cannot I get at least a larger share of the results – the increase? Must the law of supply and demand bring the teeming human race increasingly into competition with each other, and above all into competition with machinery? If so, the lot of the masses must

grow harder and harder, and the blessings of inventive genius and mechanical skill, while at present employing the masses in their construction, will become a curse as soon as the world's demands have been supplied – which time is not a great way off.

No wonder that the poor masses *fear* the power of money, brains and machinery, and seek unitedly to strike against them. The organizations and strikes, which are now so general, are not so much attempts to grasp a larger share of the necessities and luxuries of life, as a fear of losing what they now enjoy and of being carried farther than ever from the shore of comfort and safety; – for they realize that the tide of prosperity which lifted them to their present level is already turning.

This is evidenced by the recent coal strike in England. Some years ago the miners, by a general strike, secured an advance of wages of 40 per cent; and the recent strike was against a reduction of 25 per cent of this.

The miners fought with desperation, realizing that defeated now would presently mean a still further reduction. The mining district was reduced to starvation, and many died of hunger rather than work for less pay now, and still less by and by. A London Press dispatch describes matters in few words, thus: –

"All the relief now being generously poured into Yorkshire and Lancashire will not prevent the famine there getting worse each week. Correspondents on the spot describe the condition of thousands in the West Riding as fireless, foodless, shoeless, naked, and the whole district as one seething mass of misery. The death rate has gone up to something dreadful. What a crushing blow this long suspension has dealt industries of every description can be guessed by the fact that the seven principal railways, which are coal carriers, show a diminution of receipts in the past seventeen weeks of \$9,000,000."

It should be noticed, too, that the greatest unrest prevails where there is the greatest intelligence, and where there has been the greatest prosperity for the past thirty years. As the United States and Great Britain have been the most prosperous, and the peoples of these [R1606 : page 6] have the greatest general intelligence and freedom, so these have suffered most from financial depression, and in these strikes have been most frequent.

Every one is moved to pity at the thought that in these, the two most civilized and most wealthy nations, some should starve for the very necessities of life. Yet so it is. In London there have been several deaths reported from starvation, and official reports from Chicago state that 1119 persons recently slept upon the stone floors of the public buildings, being without better provision. The same state of want prevails elsewhere, but to a less extent. Chicago got the most of this class by reason of the prosperity enjoyed by that city during the Columbian Exposition. So the United States as a whole suffers most just now, and has the greatest number of unemployed, because until recently it has been so prosperous that millions came from less favored lands and are now stranded here.

We have mentioned one principal cause of the present and coming world-wide trouble to be, the competition of human and mechanical skill, resulting in the oversupply of the human element – hence the nonemployment of many and the reduced wages of the remainder; and we have seen that although temporary relief will soon come, and prosperity soon again prevail on a *lower* level, yet, the conditions remaining the same, the difficulty will become greater and greater and another spasm of depression will come which will bring wages to a yet lower level, and so on. This is, so to speak, the upper millstone.

But we might mention another important factor in this depression; viz., *money*. Gold and silver have been the money of the civilized from the days of Abraham (Gen. 23:16) until recently. Now gold is the only

standard, silver being used as a subsidiary coin for fractional change only.

While other men were using their brains, and knowledge in general was on the increase, the wealthy men, "financiers," used theirs also, and of course in their own interest. They reasoned, truly, that the more abundant the wheat or any other commodity the cheaper it is – the less valuable – and so with money: the more there is of it the less valuable it is – the less of labor and other things each dollar will purchase. They saw that if silver should be demonetized and gold made the only standard of money value, every gold dollar would gradually become worth two, because money would then be only half as plentiful: for twice as many people would struggle for it. This scheme of the European money-lenders was forced upon the nations of Europe, because all are borrowers and were obliged to comply and make their bonds payable, with interest, in gold. The influence of this extended to the United States and compelled a similar policy here, to the injury of all except those who have money at interest.

The shrinkage of the value of labor and the produce of labor of every sort one half, to the gold standard, is making it twice as difficult to pay off mortgages and other debts previously contracted. The farm and the labor on it shrink in value, but the mortgage does not. It increases in weight; for under the changed conditions the interest is more than twice as burdensome as when contracted. This is the lower millstone.

"The law of supply and demand" is bringing these two millstones very close together, and the masses who must pass between them **[R1607 : page 6]** in competition are feeling the pressure severely, and will feel it yet more.

WHAT IS THE REMEDY?

Do not people of intelligence see these matters? and will they not prevent the crushing of their fellows less favored or less skilled?

No; the majority who are favored either by fortune or skill are so busy *doing for themselves* – "making money" – diverting as much as possible of the grist to their own sacks, that they do not realize the true situation. They do hear the groans of the less fortunate and often give, generously, for their aid, but as the number of "unfortunate" grows rapidly larger, many get to feel that general relief is hopeless; and they get used to the present conditions and settle down to the enjoyment of their special blessings and comforts, and, [R1607 : page 7] for the time at least, forget the troubles of their fellow creatures, – their brethren after the flesh.

But there are a few who are well circumstanced and who more or less clearly see the real situation. Some of these, no doubt, are manufacturers, mine owners, etc. These can see the difficulties, but what can they *do*? Nothing, except to help relieve the worst cases of distress among their neighbors or relatives. They cannot change the money standard accepted by the civilized world. They cannot change the present constitution of society and destroy the competitive system in part, and they realize that the world would be injured by the total abolition of competition without some other power to take its place to compel energy on the part of the naturally indolent.

Should these few who see the difficulty and desire to curtail the operations of the law of competition attempt to put their ideas into force in their own mills, they would soon become bankrupt. For instance, suppose that the manufacturer had in his employ fifty men at an average wage of \$2.00 per day of ten hours. Suppose that, under the present business depression, caused by "money stringency" and "overproduction," his orders decreased so that one fifth of his men were idle. Suppose, then, that instead of discharging any of them he should decrease the hours of labor two hours, and make eight hours a day's labor at the same price as before. What would be the consequence? He would lose money, lose credit, become a bankrupt, and bring upon himself the curses of the creditors injured by his failure, who would charge him with dishonesty. His influence would

be lost, and even his neighbors and relatives formerly assisted by him would suffer, and reproach him.

It is evident, therefore, that no one man or company of men can change the order of society; but it can and will be changed by and by for a perfect system based, not upon selfishness, but upon love and justice, by the Lord's power and in the Lord's way, as pointed out in the Scriptures.

We have heretofore shown that the Scriptures point out a radical change of society. Not a peaceful revolution, by which the errors of the present system will be replaced by wiser and more just arrangements, but a violent removal of the present social structure and its subsequent replacement by another and satisfactory one of divine arrangement.

We do not say that there will be no patching of the present structure before its collapse. On the contrary, we assert that it will be patched in every conceivable manner. We expect many of these patchings during the next fifteen years – female suffrage, various degrees and schemes of Socialism and Nationalism, etc.; but none of these will do, the patches upon the old garment will only make its rents the more numerous, and its unfitness for patching the more apparent.

THE PROPER COURSE FOR BELIEVERS.

Shall we, then, advocate the revolution or take part in it, since we see that thus God has declared the blessings will come?

No, we should do neither. God has not revealed these things *to* the world, but to his saints; and the information is not *for* the world, but for his consecrated people. And this class the Lord directs to "live peaceably;" not to revolutionize, but to be "subject to the powers that be;" not to avenge themselves on those who legally oppress them, but to wait for the justice which they cannot secure peaceably. "Wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my

determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth [symbol of *society*] shall be devoured with the fire of my zeal. For then [after the complete destruction of the present social structure or symbolic "earth"] will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent." (Zeph. 3:8,9.) Let God's people trust him even while they see the waves of trouble coming closer and closer. God is both able and willing to make *all* things work for good to those who love him – the called ones according to his purpose. – Rom. 8:28. **[R1607 : page 8]**

To those who are not of the saints, but who are seeking to deal justly and who are perplexed on the matter, we say: The Lord had you in mind, and has sent you a message, which reads: "Seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be that [in consequence] ye shall be hid [protected] in the day of the Lord's anger." – Zeph. 2:3.

The probabilities are that, in harmony with the Apostle's prediction and figure (1 Thes. 5:3), the present trouble or pang of travail will gradually pass away, and be followed by another era of moderate prosperity, in which the worldly will measurably forget the lessons now somewhat impressed upon them. But let all who are awake remember that each succeeding pang may be expected to be more severe, until the new order of things is born; and let each seek, so far as possible, to live and deal according to the rules of love and justice, the principles of the new dispensation shortly to be introduced.
