

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER. INDUSTRIAL FEUDALISM.

The Independent has recently published an article from the pen of Mr. W. J. Ghent which has attracted general attention. Mr. Ghent points us back to the days of feudalism when lords and barons led and governed the residents of their estates almost like slaves through under chiefs, and declares that in many respects similar conditions are now approaching. "The next distinct stage in the socio-economic development of America...will be something in the nature of a benevolent feudalism," is the way he puts it; "concentration of capital and the increase of wealth will continue,...the rich will grow richer, and the multi-millionaires will approach the billion-dollar standard." He proceeds: –

"The more the great combinations increase their power, the greater is the subordination of the small concerns. They may, for one reason or another, find it possible, and even fairly profitable, to continue; but they will be more and more confined to particular activities, to particular territories, and in time to particular methods, all dictated and enforced by the pressure of the larger concerns. The petty tradesmen and producers are thus an economically dependent class; and their dependence increases with the years. In a like position, also, are the owners of small and moderate holdings in the trusts. The larger holdings – often the single largest holding – determines the rules of the game; the smaller ones are either acquiescent, or, if recalcitrant, are powerless to enforce their will. Especially is this true in America, where the head of a corporation is often an absolute ruler, who determines not only the policy of the enterprise, but the *personnel* of the board of directors."

"The laborers and mechanics were long ago brought under the yoke through their divorcement from the land and the application of

steam to factory operation. They are economically un-free except in so far as their organizations make possible a collective bargain for wages and hours. The growth of commerce raised up an enormous class of clerks and helpers, perhaps the most dependent class in the community. The growth and partial diffusion of wealth in America has in fifty years largely altered the character of domestic service and increased the number of servants manyfold. Railroad pools and farm-implement trusts have drawn a tightening cordon about the farmers. The professions, too, have felt the change. Behind many of our important newspapers are private commercial interests which dictate their general policy, if not, as is frequently the case, their particular attitude upon every public question; while the race for endowments made by the greater number of the churches and by all colleges except a few state-supported ones, compels a cautious regard on the part of synod and faculty for the wishes, the views, and prejudices of men of great wealth. To this growing deference of preacher, teacher, and editor is added that of two yet more important classes – the makers and the interpreters of law. The record of legislation and judicial interpretation regarding slavery previous to the Civil War has been paralleled in recent years by the record of legislatures and courts in matters relating to the lives and health of manual workers, especially in such cases as employers' liability and factory inspection. Thus, with a great addition to the number of subordinate classes, with a tremendous increase of their individual components, and with a corresponding growth of power in the hands of a few score magnates, there is needed little further to make up a socio-economic status that contains all the essentials of a renascent feudalism."

"Macaulay's famous dictum, that the privileged classes, when their rule is threatened, always bring about their own ruin by making further exactions, is likely, in this case, to prove untrue. A wiser forethought begins to prevail among the autocrats of today – a forethought destined to grow and expand and to prove of inestimable value **[R3057 : page 243]** when bequeathed to their successors. Our nobility will thus temper their exactions to an endurable limit; and they

will distribute benefits to a degree that makes a tolerant, if not a satisfied people. They may even make a working principle of Bentham's maxim, and after, of course, appropriating the first and choicest fruits of industry to themselves, may seek to promote the 'greatest happiness of the greatest number.' For therein will lie their greater security."

Mr. Ghent considers "the present state machinery is admirably adapted for the subtle and extra-legal exertion of power by an autocracy" and hence that neither new laws nor violent methods will be invoked. He continues: –

"The prevention of discontent will be the prior study, to which the intellect and the energies of the nobles and their legates will be ever bent. To that end the teachings of the schools and colleges, the sermons, the editorials, the stump orations, and even the plays at the theaters will be skilfully and persuasively molded; and the questioning heart of the poor, which perpetually seeks some answer [R3057 : page 244] to the painful riddle of the earth, will meet with a multitude of mollifying responses....Literature will take on the hues and tones of the good-natured days of Charles II. Instead of poetry, however, the innocuous novel will flourish best; every flowery courtier will write romance, and the literary darling of the renaissance will be an Edmund Waller of fiction. A lineal descendant of the famous Lely, who

'...on animated canvas stole

The sleepy eye that spoke the melting soul,' will be the lauded chief of our painters; and sculpture, architecture, and the lesser arts, under the spell of changed influences, will undergo a like transformation.

"This, then, in the rough, is our benevolent feudalism to-be. It is not precisely a Utopia, not an 'island valley of Avilion'; and yet it has its commendable, even its fascinating features. 'The empire is peace,' shouted the partizans of Louis Napoleon; and a like cry, with an equal

ardency of enthusiasm, will be uttered by the supporters of the new *regime*. Peace and stability will be its defensive arguments, and peace and stability it will probably bring. But tranquil or unquiet, whatever it may be, its triumph is assured; and existent forces are carrying us toward it with an ever-accelerating speed. One power alone might prevent it – the collective popular will that it shall not be. But of this there is no fear on the part of the barons, and but little expectation on the part of the underlings."

The writer of the above seems to have a clear grasp of the subject and presents it well. Our only disagreement with his hypothesis is that it will not work out as the wealthy intend it shall. The next great world-wide financial depression which we believe to be but a few years ahead of us will disconcert these plans and confound the whole world. Stockholders will demand dividends even on watered stocks; and managers however benevolently disposed and however prudent will be compelled either to advance prices or to curtail expenses or both and in the end the lower classes are sure to be so hard pressed that the Scripture predictions respecting our times will be fulfilled. – James 5:1-5; Dan. 12:1.

WHAT WILL THE HIGHER CRITICS DO WITH PAUL?

"Let the Gospel accounts of the resurrection of Jesus be given up as non-historical, there still remains the unquestionably historic and authentic testimony of Paul." This is the keynote of an article by Rev. Dr. William Cleaver Wilkinson, of Chicago University, in which he dwells upon the incalculable need the Christian Church has for Paul, as one whose testimony "no fiercest crucible fires of historical criticism can possibly in the least affect." Dr. Wilkinson (who writes in *The Homiletic Review*, June) does not think that this importance of Paul's testimony is adequately appreciated. He says:

"The cry, so rife everywhere about us, 'Back to Christ!' really means, from the lips of many who utter it, 'Away from Paul!' – nay,

even, almost, 'Away with Paul!' With many zealously active and widely influential Christian teachers and writers the feeling has been growing stronger every day for now a decade of years or more that the Apostle Paul has too long been suffered to dominate, too exclusively, our conceptions of Christianity. The view has been propagating itself by boldly declaring itself that the proper way to regard Paul's writings is to regard them as setting forth, not authoritatively the true doctrines of Christ, but only as setting forth one great mind's own individual way of conceiving those doctrines. The doctrines themselves, it is urged, in their unadulterated purity, are to be sought in the words of the living Jesus, as those words are reported by the four evangelists, but especially by the three synoptic evangelists so called, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The records of these historians, we are told, are to be carefully sifted; for the truth which they give is mingled with error – the error of imperfect report and imperfect transmission. Besides this, so we are further given to understand, there is the error, an uncertain amount, to which Jesus himself, as proved by his own admissions of ignorance on some points, was liable."

From this "pitiable state of hopeless incertitude," Paul rescues us by his witness to a "living, an ascended, a glorified Christ." It was for the sake of this service that Christ waited until after his resurrection and ascension before calling Paul to the apostleship. It is Paul alone who gives to Christ's pre-existence and to his exaltation after death the proper prominence, making almost nothing, in comparison, of the Lord's earthly life. It was not upon Jesus as a man among men, but upon Jesus as supreme divine Lord over men that Paul laid commanding emphasis. Dr. Wilkinson continues:

"The Christian Church can not afford to obey the call 'Back to Christ!' if that call be understood to mean back to the earthly Christ of the Gospel histories, away from the heavenly Christ of the epistles of Paul. The tendency, now so strong and prevalent so widely, to deal with Jesus on severely 'scientific' principles of historical criticism, simply as a man who lived once in Palestine, and whose words and

deeds were very imperfectly reported by very ill-qualified biographers, biographers that must be halted with challenge at every point and not confidently relied upon, unless they *all three* happen to relate the same thing in the same way – I say all 'three,' not all *four*, because John is to a great extent discredited and counted out as not John, but another man by the name of John – this tendency, however it may suppose itself to be peculiarly loyal to Jesus is, in deepest truth, the most specious and the most dangerous disloyalty to him that he has ever encountered in all the centuries since he finished the work on earth that was given him to do.

"Let it be duly considered, if Christ comes at length to be measured by this rule, the time will then not be distant when he will be still further reduced; and from being the pre-eminent, the ideal, the flawless man, will be found out to be at best a man not well enough known to deserve such distinction, and, at worst, a man shown to have had his limitations, his weaknesses, his infatuations, even his faults of temper in speech and in behavior, such as bring him down after all quite comfortably near the level of the better sort of average human nature."

In the opinion of Dr. Wilkinson, however, "nothing even conceivable, except the actual literal resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, can account for the undoubtedly historical phenomenon of the Apostle Paul, his career, and his written words."

The above from the *Digest* is a great satisfaction to us. We rejoice that the Chicago University has one professor still sufficiently true to God's Word and to logic to acknowledge the Apostle Paul's sound words, and their accord with the mind and words of our Lord Jesus. None who appreciate the divine plan of the ages can for a moment question that the Lord specially raised up the great Apostle to the Gentiles. We, yes, the entire cause stands or falls with this great mouth-piece of God.

IS THERE A CRISIS IN METHODISM?

Rev. Dr. L. W. Munhall, an evangelist of the Methodist Episcopal Church, is very sure that there is a crisis and that he knows what has caused it. The cause is "the dishonor put upon God's Holy Word" by Methodist professors, editors, and preachers. He does not hesitate to name them, and his list includes the names of many of the most notable in the denomination. Dr. Munhall's charges are not strictly new. He has been making them for at least three years. On June 23 he repeated them before a Methodist ministers' meeting in Philadelphia, where he secured the passage of resolutions denouncing "higher criticism" [R3057 : page 245] as "wretched stuff." He has now published his views in a pamphlet entitled "A Crisis in Methodism," in which he asserts that the spiritual life of Methodism is dying out. He writes:

"What is the real cause of our spiritual decline? Many causes have been named, some of which explain in part; but, for myself, I believe the real cause of it all is the dishonor put upon God's Holy Word in many of our educational institutions, by some editors of church periodicals, and not a few preachers; because of which the Holy Spirit has been grieved and withdrawn His power in large measure from us. Because of their commanding influence, our educational institutions are the chief offenders. Of course, I know that all these institutions are not given to this mischievous business, but most of the leading ones are. In the faculties of these institutions are men who are skeptics and rationalists; who do not at all believe the Bible is God's Word and in the doctrines of Methodism, and who [R3058 : page 245] do not hesitate to let the students know their position. They repeat infidel objections to the Bible and call it modern scholarship, and then give the young men under them for instruction to understand that they believe it all, and many of these young men take up with these skeptical views, and go out into the ministry, not to preach the Gospel of the blessed God, but their questionings, rationalism, and agnosticism."

Dr. Munhall includes in this indictment, by name, Prof. H. G. Mitchell, of Boston University School of Theology, who is accused of boasting that "he would revolutionize Methodist theology"; Prof. C. W. Rishill, acting dean of the same institution, whose book, "The Foundations of Christian Faith," "is full of poison"; Prof. Milton S. Terry, of Garrett Biblical Institute, who is charged with teaching the unhistoric character of Genesis; President Charles J. Little, of the same institute, and President Samuel Plantz, of Lawrence University, who are charged with "a denial of the omniscience of Jesus"; President Bradford P. Raymond, of Wesleyan University, who also teaches the limitation of Christ's knowledge; President William F. Warren, of Boston University, who indorses Professor Mitchell's "extremely rationalistic and Unitarian position"; President J. W. Bashford, of Ohio Wesleyan University, who is "a little more cautious in his statements than the other presidents named, but sympathizes with their views"; and, especially, Chancellor James R. Day, of Syracuse University, who is charged with staying away from Dr. Munhall's evangelistic meetings in that city three years ago because the latter assailed the critics who "teach infidel objections to the Bible." Others named in the indictment are the editors of *Zion's Herald* and *The Methodist Review*, and Prof. "Borden P. Bowen" (Bowne), of Boston University. Dr. Munhall quotes Dr. James M. Buckley as saying three years ago to Prof. M. S. Terry that if the latter were a professor in Drew, he (Dr. Buckley) would prefer charges of heresy against him. Dr. Munhall expresses himself as follows:

"I solemnly, positively, and most emphatically declare such teachings to be unbiblical, unmethodistic, and infidel; that they are destructive of spiritual life in the church and subversive of the Christian faith and hope. If any one doubts this, it is with him to explain why revivals that were once common in our educational institutions are seldom or never known; and why the faith of many of our young men is being wrecked while in college."

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