

WHAT DO THESE THINGS MEAN?

SINCE Easter Sunday, 1894, the attention of the people of the United States has been stirred, watching the armies of the "Industrials," the strikers and their consequent violence, and the calling out of armed troops because of the troubles in a connected line of States reaching from the Pacific to the Atlantic,—California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Seeing these things carried on so continuously, every man is asking his neighbor, "What does this mean?" "What is to be the end of this matter?"

These things are not meaningless. They are full of meaning in many more senses than one, but there is one meaning that they have above all others. And, seeing these things that everybody sees, let us inquire at the source of all truth, what they really do mean; for if the word of God has spoken on these things and told us anything as to what they mean, then we may be certain of that meaning, whatever other meaning may be in it all. And the Scriptures have spoken in more than one place, describing the condition of things which is now before the eyes of all people, not only of the United States, but of all the world.

Turning first to James, fifth chapter, there is the description of a time, and a condition of affairs, in which the rich are afraid of what is coming, and hold together their treasure in heaps in which the gold and silver is cankered; while on the other hand, there is a cry of the laborers against the rich, and of real distress, indeed, because their wages are kept back; and while these are in distress and are crying out because of it, these same rich ones are nourishing their hearts and living in pleasure and wantonness.

Now any one can see plainly enough that this exactly describes the situation as it is all over the United States to-day, and every one knows that this situation has been brought about by precisely the methods here described. There is certainly no room for any difference of opinion in this. The strife between the laborers and the rich, between "capital and labor," has been brought on by the insatiable desire of those who are already rich, to gather together all that was possible. Men whose income has been a million a year, when there was any sign that that income might be lessened a little, would cut down the wages of the laboring men a few cents more or less all around, while in most cases these wages were already so low that they would no more than supply the necessaries of life. Now it is hardly too much to suppose that a man with an income of a million could subsist on a half or three-quarters of a million a year, or such a part of a year as might tide over a period of business depression, thus allowing the balance of the million income to remain in payment of the wages of laborers. If all the wealthy men of the country had done this from the beginning, there would to-day be no more of a contest between capital and

labor, no more of a cry of the laborers against the rich, than there would be a cry of the earth against the rain.

For more than a year, there has been all over this land a continuous cry of hard times caused by the scarcity of money, while, as a matter of fact, all this time there has been more money in this country than ever before. In the summer of 1893 when so many banks were closed, and when there was the greatest "scarcity of money," there were hundreds of millions of dollars simply on deposit in the banks of New York City alone, to say nothing of the other great cities of the country. The trouble is not that money is scarce in itself, but what there is, is hoarded, and it is this hoarding of the money that makes the scarcity.

And being so hoarded, it is cankering. In the month of May, 1894, some workmen in a money vault, employed in recounting the money there, were in danger of being drowned in a flood of silver of which the canker had eaten up the strong sacks in which it was stored. Money that can have a chance to circulate will never canker; but to-day, although there is so much money, it is hoarded and held so closely together it can only canker. And God's word says that the cankering of it will be a witness against those who have so hoarded it, and held it back from circulation while the cries of distress are heard throughout the land. And those who have it so hoarded, even as this word also says, are living in pleasure and even wantonness. For when a woman will give a grand reception, costing hundreds of dollars, *in honor of a dog*,¹ while almost within hearing from her door are the cries of hungry people, certainly such a course is fitly described as

¹ This was actually done in the winter of 1893-4, in New York City.

“wanton.” This may be an extreme case; but, admitting that it is, it is only an extreme case in a long series of like though perhaps not identical wantonness on the part of the over rich.

And yet it is said that “capital is shy,” and will not venture forth when there is so much disturbance and such an unsettled state of public affairs generally. But if this capital would only venture forth in legitimate investments, instead of venturing so much in selfish pleasure, and such wantonness as giving grand receptions in honor of dogs, there would be no such unsettled condition of affairs as would cause capital to be afraid to venture in legitimate and beneficial enterprises. This is not however in any way to sanction or excuse the violence that so largely attends the laborers’ side of the controversy, any more than it is to sanction or excuse the wantonness of the rich.

However, we are not discussing the question of capital and labor or their relations or antagonisms, we are simply inquiring of the Scriptures, What is the meaning of the present condition and course of things? And every one knows that the foregoing statements exactly describe the situation as it is. Well then, this being the situation as described in this scripture, what does the scripture say as to the time when this shall be? This same scripture answers plainly that this is to be in the “last days.” And everybody sees now the very things that are set forth in this scripture. Then every person has before his eyes, and held irresistibly upon his attention, the positive proofs that we are in the last days.

^ Further, the Scripture has spoken of the rich and of the poor; of the hoarding of wealth and the keeping

back of the wages ; of the fear of the rich and the cries of the laborers — having spoken of these two classes, it now speaks of a third, or rather *to* a third, thus, “Be patient therefore, *brethren.*” These are the Lord’s people who are now spoken to, for he said, “Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.” Matt. 12:50. So in the times described in the previous verses, in the last days, the Lord gives a word of counsel to his own people, and he gives this counsel *because* of the times that are here described ; so he says, “Be patient, *therefore*, brethren.” And what further?— “Be patient, therefore, brethren, *unto the coming of the Lord.*” Then the great meaning, above all other meanings, which all these things bear to the people of the world to-day is that the Lord is coming. These are signs, evidences, clear and plain, of the coming of the Lord, that are being held before the eyes and upon the attention of all the people, so that it is impossible that they should not see them. Whether the people will believe that these are signs of his coming, or not, is for the people themselves to decide. The Lord has fixed upon these things in his word, and says that that is what they are. And those who would be the brethren and the people of the Lord, must see in all these things that meaning which the Lord says is there ; namely, that the Lord is coming.

The scripture continues : “Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it until he receive the early and the latter rain.” As certainly as the sowing of the seed by the farmer means a certain result, and the farmer certainly expects that result, so certainly these things which are

described in this chapter, and which all the people now see, mean a certain result, and mean that the people seeing these things can as certainly expect that result as the farmer may expect the result from his sowing: Then, just as the farmer when he has planted his grain waiteth patiently for the harvest, so the Lord would have his people wait patiently for that harvest, which is to be the end of this sowing, and "the harvest is the end of the world." Matt. 13:39.

Consequently the scripture continues to counsel the people of God, "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the Judge standeth before the door." Then the coming of the Lord is so near, and the Judge standing before the door, is so nearly ready to open that door and call all men to account, that it is too late to indulge grievances, complaints, and grudges against others. Of course there is never time for any such thing as that, but now, of all times that there have ever been in the world, there is the least time for such things and the greatest risk in indulging them. "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh," "the Judge standeth before the door," and as "every one of us" is to "give account of himself to God," and as that account is about to be called for, the thing to do is for every one to have his account so squared up each day, and each hour, that if the Judge should open the door and call for the account, it can be rendered with joy and not with grief.

There is another passage of scripture that so fully describes the present situation, in another phase that it is worth noting. All men see the way that

things are going, and they know that the times are perilous, and they resort to combinations of different sorts by which, if possible, to save themselves from results which they see must certainly follow, even viewed from the standpoint of the world. The laborers combine in unions, leagues, etc., to save themselves from what seems to them must certainly come. The farmers do the same, and the capitalists do the same. Now in the eighth chapter of Isaiah, this course of things is described, and the word says: "Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us. For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying [that is, the Lord says to us], Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. . . . And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him." Isa. 8:9-17. Thus it is clearly shown that in the time of waiting and watching for the coming of the Lord, there will be this time of general distress and fear, in view of what is coming; and also this time of association and combination and confederation of many together to save themselves from that which they fear. It shows also that none of these associations, combinations, or confederacies will help those who enter into them. But the

word which they speak "shall not stand;" the counsel which they take together will "come to nought;" and the combinations which they make, and even they, themselves, in those confederations, "shall be broken in pieces."

No, no. Confederation or association of men will not save them in this time. Every effort made in that way will only increase the trouble and the danger which they hoped to escape. This also is apparent to everyone who looks at these things as they are to-day; for never was there a time in the world when there were such vast combinations of capital, and never was there a time when capital was so insecure. Never were there such vast organizations and combinations of labor, and never was labor in a worse plight. Unions, federations, combinations, will not help matters. These evils will grow worse and worse. Men themselves will grow worse and worse. 2 Tim. 3:1-5, 13. And by no combination or invention can men save themselves from themselves.

None but the Lord can save, even temporally, in this time. Therefore, in the presence of these things, when men are in fear and in dread, their hearts moved as the trees of the woods are moved with the wind, He counsels us, "Stablish your hearts," let your hearts be fixed, so that you shall be safe and unmoved when others are in fear and in dread. "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary," that is, for a refuge, a place of safety and security, a dwelling place, a shelter in the time of storm. For, "he that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty;"

and in the shadow of his wings can we make our refuge till these calamities be overpast.

Another scripture worthy of note is in Habakkuk, first and second chapters. There, in the first chapter, is related how the Lord caused the prophet in vision to see violence and strife, grievances and contentions, injustice and oppression. Verses 1-4. In astonishment the prophet inquired how the Lord, who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity,—how he could look upon such a scene as this and not do something; how he could keep silence while there was such treacherous dealings, and the wicked devouring the man who is more righteous than he. Verses 13-15. Then after the prophet had presented thus his earnest inquiry, he says: "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd. And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith." In Hebrews 10: 36, 37, this passage of scripture is applied directly to the coming of the Lord in these words: "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

In Habakkuk, the counsel of the Lord to the prophet proceeds to describe those men who enlarge their desire as the grave (which is one of the things that never say, I have enough); and who are as death, that is, will never let go that which they have gained, and cannot be satisfied. He also describes, on the other hand, those who are oppressed and robbed by these, and says: "Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a taunting proverb against him, and say, Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his! how long? . . . Shall they not rise up suddenly that shall bite thee, and awake that shall vex thee, and thou shalt be for booties unto them?"

Here is a description of the very things that are going on. There is a cry against the rich that there must be a more equal distribution of the good things of this world. Already the cry has been often raised, How long shall this continue? Already threats have been made, not secretly, but openly and loudly, not by the lowest of the rabble, but by men in high places, that the wealth that is so abundant and that is hoarded shall be made booty for those who have not. Booty is that which is taken away by violence, and here is the word of a man to that effect who to-day is Secretary of State of one of the States of the Union, and was such when the statement was made:—

"I want to make a prediction. It is that there will be no overt act until the next election, then simultaneously with the returns, the flames will shoot up into the air from the Atlantic to the Pacific."

And here is another, not by a man in any official position, but one who spoke for thousands:—

"In Massachusetts the workingmen were browbeaten and not heard. If things go on in this way, and the rich and the lawmakers

turn their backs upon the poor, refusing to listen to the workmen, there will follow an epidemic of assassination. Bombs will be exploded, and all the devices known for taking off oppressors will be the fate of our delinquent legislators and capitalists."

In view of what has occurred within the present year in Europe, it would seem that there the epidemic of assassination has even already begun, and with such a stirring up as this in the United States, with what has already appeared, it would seem also that such things could not be far off here.

And the scripture which we are examining continues to describe this very element: "Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant of the people shall spoil thee; because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein." Hab. 2:8. If we have not now reached the time when there is violence in the city, and in the land, and amongst all that dwell therein, certainly things cannot go on much longer as they have been going since last Easter day, without bringing the country, and even the civilized world, positively to that condition. And the Lord said more than once, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." In the days of Noah the earth was "filled with violence," and for these three months and more, straight ahead, violence has almost covered this land from ocean to ocean.

And the time when this should be is also made clear by the statement that it is among the "*remnant of the people.*" The remnant of anything is the last portion of it. The scripture speaks of the remnant of the church and the remnant of God's people, plainly referring to the last stage of the church and the last of God's

people who shall be upon the earth,—those who shall be delivered at the coming of the Lord. But here is the remnant, not of the church, nor of God's people, but the remnant of all the people, the remnant of the people of the earth, and that is just as clearly the last of the people that shall be upon the earth. And these things which are being carried on before the eyes of all the people, this continual strife and violence that is being manifested throughout the land and throughout the civilized world, this the scripture says will be in the time of "the remnant of the people." Therefore it is certain that the people that are now upon the earth are the remnant, the last of the people who shall be upon the earth. "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord." "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

There is just one more scripture that we will notice in this connection. This is the word spoken by the Lord himself when he was upon the earth, in answer to the question by his disciples as to what should be the sign of his coming and the end of the world. He answered as follows: "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth. Luke 21:25, 26. The signs in the sun and in the moon and the stars have long been in the past. The sun was to be darkened, and the moon to be turned to blood, and the stars were to fall from heaven, before the great and terrible day of the Lord should come. Joel 2:31, 32; Rev. 6:12-17. These signs in the sun and moon were

fulfilled in the wonderful dark day of 1780.¹ In November, 1833, the sign was fulfilled which said that the stars should fall from heaven, "even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind."²

These signs are then long in the past, and from them it is evident that we are nearing the coming of the Lord. But there are other signs mentioned which are nearer to us than those—signs that are even right around us and so persistently thrust before our eyes and upon our attention that it is impossible, not to see them. There is upon the earth to-day such distress of nations with perplexity as never has been before. Nations have been distressed before, but not so greatly distressed, nor with perplexity. An individual or a nation may be distressed and may be able to see and find a way of escape; but when either an individual or a nation is not only distressed but perplexed, then there is no knowing which way to turn. Each thing that is resorted to, to relieve the distress, only increases the perplexity. And this is precisely the condition in which the nations, as nations and as governments, are to-day—through fear of war, through financial dis-

¹ "Dark Day, The, May 19, 1780, so called on account of a remarkable darkness on that day, extending over all New England. In some places persons could not see to read common print in the open air for several hours together . . . The true cause of this remarkable phenomenon is not known."—*Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, in Explanatory and Pronouncing Vocabulary, art., Dark Day.*

"The night succeeding that day (May 19, 1780) was of such pitchy darkness that in some instances horses could not be compelled to leave the stable when wanted for service."—*Stone's History of Beverly (Mass.).*

² "But the most sublime phenomenon of shooting stars, of which the world has furnished any record, was witnessed throughout the United States on the morning of the 13th of November, 1833. The entire extent of this astonishing exhibition has not been precisely ascertained; but it covered no inconsiderable portion of the earth's surface."—*Burritt's Geography of the Heavens, p. 163, ed. 1854.*

trous, through socialistic threats and anarchistic explosions. In view of all these things, and others which have been mentioned, men's hearts are now, as never before, failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth. All these things are before us and around us. They have all come to pass and are here, and the very next thing that the Saviour mentions is this: "The powers of heaven shall be shaken. And *then* shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Luke 21: 26, 27. So that after these there is no other sign given us of the coming of the Lord. For the shaking of the powers of heaven occurs in immediate connection with the coming of the Lord, so that this is not, in itself, a sign of the coming of the Lord, but is the convulsion of nature itself at the coming of the Lord. So that it is a literal truth that every sign which the Saviour gave in this list of signs of his coming, is either far in the past or is now passing before the eyes of all the people upon the earth. The next thing is the coming of the Lord himself.

The Saviour comments upon this and says: "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Luke 21: 28. "So likewise ye when ye shall see all these things, know that it [margin "he"] is near, even at the doors." Matt. 24: 33. So that when the signs in the sun and in the moon and stars began to appear, then redemption *drew nigh*. Now, when we see not only that the signs in the sun, moon, and stars are all long in the past, but that the distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and waves roaring, and men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things that are coming upon the earth, are

passing in the presence of all the people—now, we know that *he is near, even at the door.*

And this is the answer which the Lord has given to that question which every man is asking his neighbor,—What do these things mean? The word of God says that these things mean that the harvest is ripe, that the end is near, that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. And his counsel to all the people is therefore, “Get ready! get ready! get ready!” “Stablish your hearts,” “Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; . . . and he shall be for a sanctuary;” “Let your loins be girded about; and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh, and knocketh, they may open unto him *immediately.*” Luke 12 : 35, 36.

“For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore : for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning : lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, WATCH.” Mark 13 : 34-37.

Nor does the Lord leave men to themselves in this all-important matter of getting ready for his coming. He himself will fully prepare every soul for this great and glorious event, who will surrender himself to the Lord and to the working of his divine will. He has predestinated man to be conformed to the image of his Son. To this end he has called all men.

“Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together; who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the Lord? and there is no God else

beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." Isa. 45 : 22.

What does he say must be done to be saved? "*Look unto me and be ye saved.*" "*Look.*"

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life."

When Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, the word was, "Look and live." And whosoever looked was cured of the poisonous bites of the serpents. So he says to-day:—

"*Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.*"

If you are blind and cannot see, and therefore unable to look, then he comes to you and says:—

"*Hear, and your soul shall live.*" Isa. 55 : 3.

If you are both blind and deaf, and can neither see nor hear, then he says:—

"*Speak ye unto the Rock, . . . and it shall give forth his water.*"
"And that Rock was Christ." Num. 20 : 8 ; 1 Cor. 10 : 4.

If you are blind, and deaf, and dumb, and can neither see, nor hear, nor speak, then he says:—

"*O taste and see that the Lord is good.*" Ps. 34 : 8.

If you are blind, and deaf, and dumb, and have lost all sense of taste, and there is only one single faculty remaining, use that, for he says—

"*Feel after him, and find him.*" Acts 17 : 27.

Thus the God of Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ, has brought his glorious salvation, his eternal salvation,

within the reach of every individual in this world who can either see, or hear, or speak, or feel. And that is all he asks of you. That is God's way of salvation. Will you accept this salvation and so be justified by the Lord, and thus by him be prepared to be glorified at his glorious appearing which is now so near, and of which there are so many signs?

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